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INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

October 4, 1998

Free Fall

**Fred Weir
reports
from Russia**

**Linda Lutton on
The Return
of the
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Machine**



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- ▲ **Barbara Epstein** on feminism today
- ▲ **Chris Lehmann** on class in America
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- ▲ **Dr. Quentin Young** on public health and universal health care
- ▲ **Barbara Dudley** on the politics of environmentalism
- ▲ **Bob Peterson** on the crisis in public schools

...and others to be announced.

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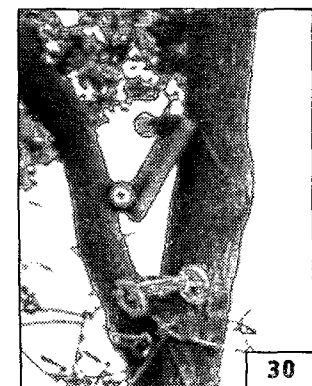
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COVER PHOTO: AFP/YURI KADOBNOV

Crisis? What Crisis?

Todd Gitlin merely repackages DeBord, Vaneigem and McLuhan's cultural critique of the '60s into a critique of the '90s ("Liberal Arts Versus Information Glut," September 20). Unlike Baudrillard, he does a sloppy job of it. Picking only at the surface of youth culture, Gitlin asserts that university-going youth live their lives through identification with vacuous Diana-like mass narratives. Huh? Been young lately?

No surprises here. Gitlin proceeds to admonish liberal arts students for abandoning the sacred canon (these wayward youths), deviating from the stifling rigidity of academic pedagogy. That argument assumes that liberal arts students are abandoning the classics, which they aren't.

Change is scary, but such reflexive "hell in a hand basket" whining is just pathetic.

Jeff Naffziger
Chicago

Back to the Dustbin

I was deeply offended by Juan Gonzalez's article, "Madness and Social Policy" (September 6). I would have thought that the word "crazy" had been consigned to the dustbin of history, along with all of the racist, sexist and homophobic slurs decent people no longer use. Also, the term "paranoid schizophrenic" is a medical diagnosis for a serious brain disorder, not a predictor of lethal behavior.

I have always believed that the greatest prospects for justice for the mentally ill lay with the left. Unfortunately, after reading this article I wonder if we are truly welcome there.

Jeff Hawk
Trenton, N.J.

Par for the Course

As we consider the CNN nerve-gas story, let us recall a few facts ("Smoke Screen," September 6). According to James P. Harrison, in his book *The Endless War*, we dumped 18,850,000 gallons of herbicides on Vietnam, including Agent Orange contaminated with dioxin. On a country smaller than California, we dropped "over three times the tonnage of bombs dropped in all of World War II." Our war in Vietnam ended up killing an estimated three million Vietnamese. Closer to home, our military killed four students at Kent State University for protesting the war. I have no difficulty believing we gassed deserters in the jungles of Laos.

James Billings
Del Rio, Texas

Return to Your Seat

David Futrelle presents us with the airline biz equivalent of "welfare queen" stories ("Appall-O-Meter," September 6). It may be true that some fliers have responded obscenely to conditions on planes. But those of us outside of prison rarely encounter a more authoritarian

environment, an environment in which we are routinely lied to, misinformed and abused. (HMOs run a close second.)

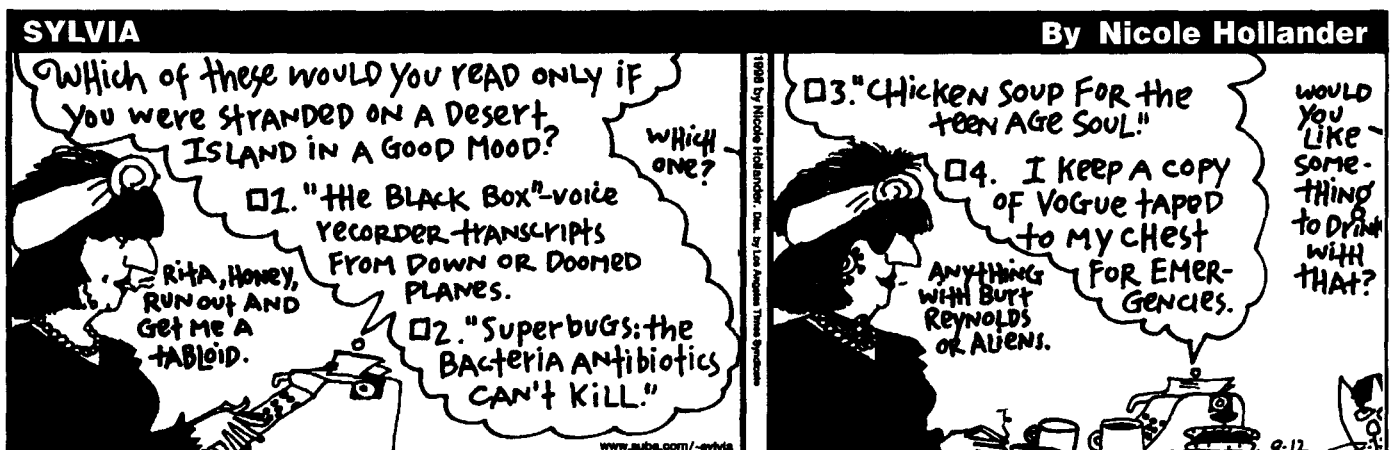
You lose your First Amendment rights when you set foot in these flying profit-making slums: try uttering the word "Cuba." An "independent" publication like *In These Times* would do better to explore these conditions and stop swallowing airline propaganda and blaming passengers who, quite understandably, lose it in these circumstances.

We will soon have articles in *In These Times* blaming those who react badly to HMOs, or retelling the old stories about the behavior of those who reacted badly to life in other slums.

Jesse Lemisch
New York

News from the Newsroom

With this issue, we welcome our new culture editor, Joe Knowles, who has forsaken the land of the lotus eaters for the city of broad shoulders. An English major from the University of California, Berkeley, Joe previously made his living as a reporter for *Venture Finance* in San Francisco. He has also contributed to *The Nation* and *The Harvard Gay & Lesbian Review*.



The Administration Bombs, Again

The embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania last month—as Malcolm X would say—are one more example of chickens coming home to roost. Once again, nobody wins.

More to the point, if we don't face up to the underlying reality of American foreign policy of the past half century, our "enemies"—which is to say the people of the countries that our leaders designate as terrorists—will suffer more death and destruction from bombs raining from the sky and more economic deprivation from sanctions imposed from abroad. We will, in turn, find ourselves ever more despised throughout the world and subject to paranoid demagoguery at home. Abroad, our embassies have already become armed fortresses or, like those in Ghana and Togo, have simply closed. At home, we are increasingly obsessed with the danger of chemical and biological attacks on our cities.

Imperial powers always breed resistance, which, unlike their own depredations, they define as "terrorism." After World War II, as the British retired gracefully from their role as the world's leading imperial power, the United States—then almost universally loved and admired—took over. But in an ever-expanding search for markets and investment opportunities, America's rulers tried to impose their will around the globe. In the process, they disrupted or destroyed resistant governments, pushed out imperial rivals and, in the process, created mortal enemies.

In the Middle East, soon after the end of the war, Mohammed Mossadegh, the democratically elected prime minister of Iran, nationalized the British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. This act of impertinence, along with his neutrality in the Cold War, proved costly: He was overthrown in 1953 in a CIA-backed coup. The United States and Britain replaced him with the Shah, a friendly "modernizer." Iran's oil remained nominally nationalized, but 40 percent went to British oil companies and 40 percent to American ones. To quell dissent, the Shah's brutal regime persecuted its critics, which included both secular leftists and religious fundamentalists (though up until 1977 the CIA paid off the latter to remain quiet). This gave rise to a fundamentalist Shiite movement led by the Ayatollah Khomeini. He instilled in his followers a hatred of all things Western, and when he emerged as Iran's popular leader, Khomeini initiated a holy war against U.S. outposts.

Another source of terrorism was created by the CIA in Pakistan and Afghanistan in the '80s, during the

U.S. campaign against the Soviet-controlled Afghan government. During the '70s, Afghanistan, like Iran, was the scene of externally imposed "modernization" (in this case, Soviet-style). As a result, thousands of Afghans fled to Pakistan, where they organized guerrilla attacks on the Soviet-sponsored regime.

Seeing a great opportunity, the Reagan administration illegally armed and "advised" the Afghan resistance. In this covert operation, which cost an estimated \$3 billion, the CIA worked with a super-wealthy Saudi, Osama bin Laden, whom the agency provided with state-of-the-art weapons and a mountain fortress. The Russians withdrew their troops in 1989. In 1995, the Taliban, also financed by bin Laden, took over and imposed a harsh Islamic fundamentalist regime on most of the country.

Now, our former ally bin Laden is our mortal enemy. He believes that the Saudi regime has subordinated itself to the United States and betrayed Islam. He told ABC News in May, "Leave Saudi Arabia or die." He

The Pentagon used their sophisticated technology to fight terror with terror. Smart on the details, clueless on social reality, the bombings of Afghanistan and Sudan have created more enemies throughout the world.

also sees the United States not only as the protector of Israeli security—which most Arabs accept—but also as the main obstacle to the achievement of Palestinian autonomy. In an effort to push the United States out of the region, bin Laden has dedicated himself, and much of his vast wealth, to "kill the Americans and their allies—civilian and military."

This threat is not to be taken lightly. But what can we learn from it, and how should we respond? The answer requires thought, not the blind use of force. The savant idiots in the Pentagon, possibly taking advantage of a weak president, used their sophisticated technology to fight terror with terror. Smart on the details, clueless on social reality, the bombings of Afghanistan and Sudan have created thousands, perhaps millions, more enemies throughout the world.

But the battle is not about firepower. It is for the hearts and minds of people throughout the world. Unfortunately, our national policy is driven by the narrow self-interest of corporate America, and by the military minions who serve and protect their dominance.

In the end, you reap what you sow.—J.W.

Northern Ireland Picks Up the Pieces

By Kelly Candaele

OMAGH, NORTHERN IRELAND

A team of Secret Service agents descended on Omagh in preparation for Bill Clinton's visit on September 3. Clinton's advance guard came to this small mixed community of Catholics and Protestants in County Tyrone to "make it safe" for the president, something the British military and Northern Irish police have been unable to accomplish for the people of the six counties since the modern "Troubles" began in the late '60s.

Since the bomb blast on August 15—which took the lives of 28 people, mostly women and children—Omagh has seen a steady stream of political visitors: British Prime Minister Tony Blair, unionist leader David Trimble, Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams and Clinton. They all have come to pay their condolences and to reassure a devastated community that the peace process, which ostensibly began with an IRA ceasefire in 1994, will not be derailed.

The strategic objectives of the peace process have been accomplished: A peace agreement was negotiated in April, a referendum on that agreement was approved in the north and south on May 22, and elections to the new assembly took place on June 25. Moderate unionists and both Catholic nationalist parties, Sinn Fein and the larger Social Democratic and Labour Party, are all part of the peace process. But Adam's greatest fear, a split in the IRA, threatens the fragile process.

The so-called "Real IRA" took credit for the bombing. They consist of one hundred or so ex-Provisional IRA members who have repudiated Adam's leadership and Sinn Fein's decision to enter a Northern Ireland assembly without guarantees of a British withdrawal. Adams immediately condemned the bombing, something he had never done when similar "mistakes" were made by the IRA, and he called upon the Real IRA to disband "sooner rather than later."

Adams is in a precarious situation. The executive of the Northern Ireland

Assembly will be named in the coming weeks and Sinn Fein has qualified for two seats. Leading up to Clinton's visit, there was increasing pressure on Adams and the IRA to declare that the "war is over" and begin decommissioning of weapons. But before the bombing, Adams made it clear that "the war will only be over when the British Army of occupation demilitarizes, when all of the prisoners are free and when there is justice and equality."

The atrocity of Omagh changed things dramatically. Anticipating Clinton's arrival, a series of "gestures" were made that should move the peace process another step forward. While early in the week, *An Phoblacht*, Sinn Fein's newspaper, stated unequivocally that arms decommissioning would not take place before the executive was named—a hardline position—Adams

followed up the next day with most of what people had been waiting for. He said, "Violence must be for all of us now, a thing of the past, over, done with and gone." His statement was greeted enthusiastically by the Irish and British governments and Clinton.

Trimble, the first minister of the new Northern Irish Assembly, responded cautiously, but it was clear that another hurdle had been cleared. Trimble insisted upon arms decommissioning, but he acknowledged that Adams was "in a difficult position"—the first time he had admitted that anyone but himself faced problems securing his political base. Now Trimble must convince his fellow unionists in the assembly to accept Sinn

Fein's participation. If he fails, the assembly will collapse, and it's back to war. If that happens, the Omagh bomb will have accomplished its goal—the destruction of the peace process.

The British and Irish governments are not waiting around for Adams or Trimble to consolidate the political arrangements. They have both approved draconian changes in their legal systems to expedite the rounding up of suspected terrorists. After the changes, suspected terrorists can be convicted upon the mere testimony of police officials and an "inference of guilt" can be used as evidence against anyone refusing to answer questions. A poll in the Republic of Ireland indicated that more than 90 percent support a dramatic increase in police powers.

Local citizens have taken things into their own hands as well. In Dundalk, a



AFP/JOYCE NALCHAVAN

The Clintons and the Blairs tour the damage in Omagh.

city just south of the Northern Irish border, hundreds of protesters demonstrated against two leaders of the 32 County Sovereignty Committee, the political wing of the Real IRA, shutting down their small business and virtually driving them out of town.

Near the bomb site in Omagh two days before Clinton's arrival, people attempted to move through a normal day. But when an older woman was asked about the bombing, her only response was, "Dear God, when will it ever cease?" ■

Kelly Candaele has written about Ireland for several publications. He lives in Los Angeles.

A Careful Count in the Motor City

By Ted Kleine

DETROIT

Since the '50s, when it had nearly two million people, Detroit has been emptying out faster than any big city in America. Bulldozers plow down thousands of empty, dilapidated houses each year, and pheasants now roost in city blocks that have been abandoned to weeds.

In the 2000 census, Detroit may finally drop below the one-million mark, which would trigger a financial disaster for what was once America's fourth-largest city. With fewer than a million people, the city will be stripped of taxing powers the state of Michigan reserves only for cities with a seven-figure population. If that happens, Detroit will lose \$176 million a year in state and federal funds.

Detroit officials predict they'll squeak by, as they did in 1990, when city workers went door-to-door counting people the Census Bureau had missed. The city estimates the current population at 1,000,272. Michelle Zdrodowski, press secretary for Mayor Dennis W. Archer, says, "We expect to be over that by 2000. We've had a lot of regrowth in the city."

But Kurt Metzger, a demographer with Wayne State University, thinks there's no way a conventional head count, the kind the Census Bureau has been using since 1790, will find a million Detroiters. The only way the city can top the mark, he says, is if the bureau uses census sampling, a controversial method designed to bolster population numbers in areas where people traditionally have been undercounted, such as inner cities and Indian reservations.

Sampling would work like this: After counting at least 90 percent of the households in each census tract with

questionnaires or home visits, the Census Bureau would use that data to project the number of people in the homes it missed. Sampling would not only produce a more accurate count, says Patrick Cantwell, a mathematical statistician with the bureau, it would also be cheaper, since enumerators would have to visit fewer homes.

The Census Bureau wants to use sampling in 2000, but Republicans in Congress are fighting the measure—and making headway. Sampling would account for more groups apt to vote Democratic: In 1990, the bureau missed about 1.8 percent of the U.S. population. The undercount rate for whites

Constitution, which calls for an "actual enumeration" of Americans. On August 24, a three-judge federal panel ruled in favor of the GOP. The Clinton administration plans to appeal the case to the Supreme Court.

This summer, the House passed a bill that would fund the Census Bureau only through March; the bureau would then have to give up on sampling to receive the remainder of its budget. President Clinton is expected to veto the bill, which could lead to a government shutdown this fall.

During the debate on the funding bill, Rep. Cynthia McKinney (D-Ga.) charged that the GOP's opposition to sampling is "Republican tricks and Dixie politics." "If the Republican Party has their way," she says, "they will return us to the days of Dred Scott, where poor people and people of color count as three-fifths of a person."

The Census Bureau is simultaneously preparing to use sampling and a full head count. It will need a decision from Congress or the Supreme Court by next April, a year before the census starts.

Detroit is also preparing for a full count, says Norman Cassells of the city's Planning and Development Department. Already, the department is compiling lists of addresses where people are frequently missed—apartment buildings, nursing homes, dormitories, homeless shelters—and plans to turn them over to the Census Bureau. In 2000, it will set up help centers and

hotlines for residents who have trouble filling out the questionnaires, and may launch a repeat of the 1990 "Were You Counted?" campaign, in which city workers visited homes that didn't return a form. "We have so much at stake here that we are pulling out all the stops, probably more so than other cities," Cassells says. "Sampling would be icing on the cake for us, but we are trying to do everything we can to count everybody." ■

Ted Kleine is a writer in Chicago.



was 0.7 percent. For blacks, it was 4.4 percent, for Hispanics, 5 percent, and for Indians on reservations, 12.2 percent. If sampling boosts the numbers of these groups, Republicans reason that more federal aid will flow to Democratic districts and Democrats could gain seats in Congress and state legislatures.

Led by Speaker Newt Gingrich, House Republicans filed a lawsuit in February charging that sampling would violate both the Census Act, which prohibits the use of sampling data to draw congressional districts, and the

Appall-o-Meter

The In These Times Index of Indecencies

By David Futrelle

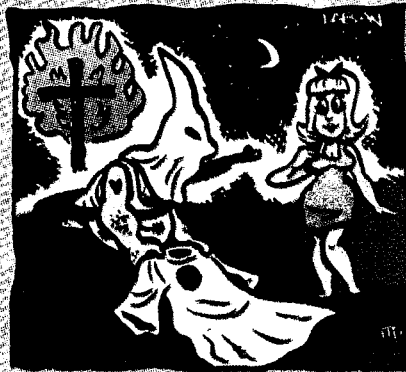
Ku Klux Kindness 9.2

Sure, former Ku Klux Klan chief Samuel H. Bowers was charged with—and, after five trials, eventually convicted of—ordering the murder of civil rights activist Vernon Dahmer in 1966. But according to Deavours Nix, a Klan colleague testifying in Bowers' defense at his recent trial, the Klan was merely a charitable organization—more interested in delivering fruit baskets and helping the needy than in firebombing black activists and “race traitors.” Nix told the jury that Bowers was guilty of nothing more than being a nice guy. “Samuel Bowers was a gentleman at all times,” he said. “He was very kind to the ladies.” The jury, at least, wasn't charmed.

(Dip)lomacy 5.1

What he lacks in diplomatic expertise he hopes to make up for with his knowledge of Hollywood gossip. Actor Michael Douglas suggests that his basic celebrity instincts will enable him to succeed as a newly appointed United Nations Messenger of Peace,

despite his pronounced lack of experience in the field of international relations. “It's easier to start off a touchy conversation talking about what Demi Moore or Kathleen Turner is like, than immediately confronting an issue,” he said.

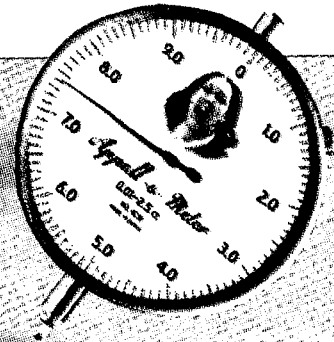


Scouting for Bargains 6.3

The Girl Scouts always have been good at selling cookies. Now, it seems, they're boning up on their shopping skills as well. In a program developed in conjunction with Limited Too, a branch of the Limited clothing chain that markets to girls ages 7 to

14, the Scouts are offering special patches for mastering the basic skills of mall-ratting. “To earn the patch, the Girl Scouts must troop off to a Limited Too, where they learn about fabrics, markdowns, store security and what merchandisers do,” the *Wall Street Journal* reports. “The girls get to browse among clothes racks, choose their favorite outfits and model in front of others. They also get 15 percent off coupons from the store.”

While some parents are concerned that the program might be too commercial for its own good—serving as little more than a promotional gimmick—it has proven so popular with the girls that there's a waiting list to get in. “Obviously, that's part of the marketing to get the girls in there the first time so they'll drag their parents back to buy something,” said Lisa Grady, leader of Troop 2213 in Hilliard, Ohio. But she's convinced the program is basically harmless. “It isn't like [we're promoting] cigarettes.” ■



Chicago Approves a Living Wage

By Kristin Kolb

On a steamy July day, the Chicago City Council sweated it out. It was the last day they could give themselves a raise for four years. So, in a surprise move to deflect attention from their rising salaries, the council voted on July 29 to approve a living wage ordinance, raising the minimum wage for some city workers to \$7.60 per hour.

The living wage ordinance was the work of a progressive coalition led by the Chicago New Party. Two years in the making, it was first defeated by the council a year ago. When the New Party got wind of the City Council's proposed pay increase, they organized a rally outside city hall. Members also canvassed

six wards to garner support. At the rally, SEIU chief steward Lydia Steward warned the council of the public embarrassment their raises would provoke if they didn't approve a living wage: “Some of these aldermen are going to vote themselves out of a job.”

The council listened. The law will cover more than 3,000 employees of city contractors. Full-time workers now earning \$10,000 will earn more than \$15,000 when it takes effect in February.

At the same time, salaries for Chicago aldermen will increase from \$75,000 to \$85,000, while Mayor Richard M. Daley, City Clerk Jim Laski and City Treasurer Miriam Santos will each get 13 percent boosts—hiking

Daley up to \$192,100, only \$8,000 less than President Clinton's yearly salary.

The New Party is currently campaigning for living wage ordinances in Madison, Wis., Mizzoula, Mont. and Montgomery County, Md. “From bus drivers in Milwaukee to home health care workers in Chicago to parking attendants in Minneapolis, the working poor have received real economic benefits from the living wage campaign,” says Adam Glickman, communications director for the New Party. “The biggest success of the campaign has been in its organizing. It has catalyzed the coalitions between union and community groups in poor and working class areas.

“It's the most successful example of the left getting their word into the mainstream. Every politician now knows what living wage means.” ■

Campaigning for a Christian Nation

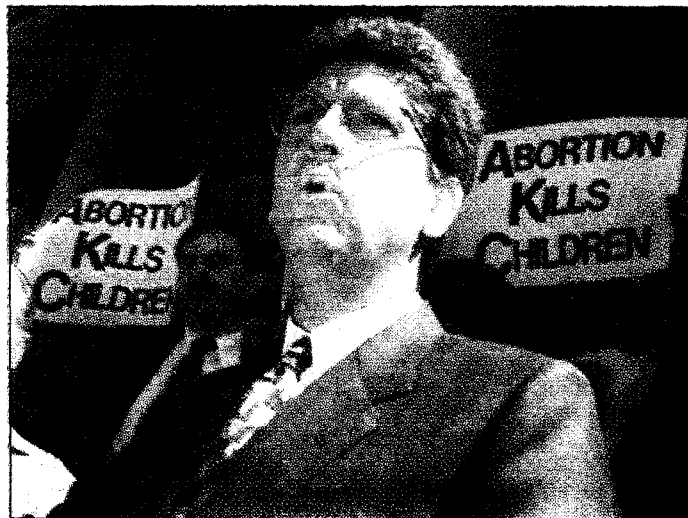
By Annette Fuentes

Religious right extremist Randall Terry doesn't much like the U.S. government, but he'd like to be a part of it just the same. The ayatollah of anti-abortion activism and founder of Operation Rescue, Terry hopes to win the Republican primary on September 15 as the party's candidate for New York's 26th Congressional District.

The 26th District is currently represented by three-term incumbent Maurice Hinchey, one of the House's most liberal Democrats. Its boundaries include parts of Broome, Sullivan, Ulster and Dutchess counties. Terry faces two other primary challengers—William "Bud" Walker, an apple orchard owner with deep pockets and moderate Republican views, and lawyer Douglas Drazen, a long-shot by most accounts. The 26th was a natural choice for Terry, who launched Operation Rescue from Binghamton in Broome County, and now makes his headquarters on a sprawling farm nearby where he runs "Christian Leadership" workshops. It also would put him head-to-head with one of Congress' staunchest supporters of women's reproductive rights.

Terry whet his appetite for electoral politics with a failed run for governor in 1994 as the candidate of the U.S. Taxpayers, a fringe independent party. This time, his campaign coffers are brimming with contributions from around the country, stimulated no doubt by his weekly radio talk show, *Randall Terry Live*. As of July, Terry's campaign had reported total contributions of \$455,000, with the overwhelming majority of funds coming from out of state. In fact, of 350 individual contributors listed in his July report to the Federal Elections Commission, only 26 live in New York.

Though Terry is best known for his militant anti-abortion tactics and assaults on clinics, he stepped down as head of Operation Rescue in 1989. In recent years, he has expanded his political platform to embrace a virulent brand of anti-tax, anti-government, fundamentalist Christianity that makes the Christian Coalition look moderate. In an address to the U.S. Taxpayers Alliance in 1995, Terry outlined his vision of a "Christian nation," in which doctors who perform abortions "better flee, because we will find you, we will try you, and we will execute you." He said



Randall Terry

the greatest crisis Americans face is a lack of male leadership: "God established a patriarchal world. ... If we are going to have true reformation in America, it is because men once again ... have righteous testosterone flowing through their veins."

Terry launched his campaign back on June 23 with the catchy slogan "You Pay For It" and a four-point program: eliminate all property taxes; abolish the IRS and all federal income taxes; privatize Social Security; and "restore America's Judeo-Christian political heritage." Terry believes that tariffs and duties would provide sufficient resources to

maintain a stripped down federal government, whose role would primarily be to maintain roads and a strong military. Public schools, Medicaid and Medicare and any public assistance would be out. "Health and Human Services would go bye-bye," he announced. "They call it compassion, but it's theft."

While Terry's chances of beating the popular Hinchey seem slim, some political observers think he may have a shot at besting Walker in the primary or getting the Conservative Party ballot line. Low voter turn-out in a year when Republican Gov. George Pataki faces no serious challenger may also work in his favor. Walker has scored endorsements from most of the Republican county organizations in the district, as well as those of some groups of the Conservative Party, a statewide third party often allied with right-leaning Republican candidates.

< Terry has garnered only three endorsements from county Conservative Party groups. But he is media savvy. Since January, he has spent generously on local radio and TV spots. In one radio ad aired this summer, Terry borrowed a Budweiser beer slogan to attack Walker. Anheuser-Busch executives got wind of Terry's copyright violation and threatened legal action if he didn't pull the ads. He did, but got added mileage out of the controversy in the press.

Watching Terry's campaign chug along, the National Organization for Women is keeping an eye on his travels around the country and in New York—and for good reason. On January 8, NOW settled a 10-year battle against Terry for his involvement in clinic blockades and harassment, when he agreed to a permanent injunction against any future clinic demonstrations or blockades. Terry also is subject to some \$300,000 in court fines, and, because he claimed insolvency, NOW went after one asset he can't hide: his frequent flier miles.

"We'd rather have him run for Congress than bomb clinics," says Elizabeth Toledo, action vice president of NOW. ■

Media in Cruise Control in Wake of U.S. Bombings

By Jeff Cohen and Seth Ackerman

After U.S. military strikes abroad, mainstream media coverage tends to follow a traditional script. International law, if mentioned at all, is treated as a mere platitude, not as a

specific body of precedent. After the recent cruise missile attacks on a Sudanese pharmaceutical plant and Afghan

paramilitary camps, for example, few reporters inquired into what "self-defense" actually means in international law (see "Inalienable Right," below).

Civilian casualties of U.S. attacks—if shown at all in the mainstream media—appear briefly and after warnings that the footage is likely part of a propaganda campaign. In contrast to U.S. victims of foreign terrorists, we rarely learn the names of civilian victims or hear their families' reactions to the attack. True to script, Sudanese civilian victims made only cameo appearances in the American media.

Only because of the media-hyped sex scandal raging around Bill Clinton did some mainstream reporters diverge from the traditional script to question the President's political motives (*à la Wag the Dog*). It's refreshing to see Washington reporters finally asking such questions—queries rarely raised when past presidents capitalized politically on military adventures.

Another departure from script, though slow in coming in the U.S. media, was the questioning of the Clinton administration's evidence for targeting the Sudanese factory. Within two days of the attack, the European press was quoting factory managers, among others, to puncture the initial U.S. claim that the Sudanese plant was a terrorist-funded nerve gas factory with no civilian purpose. In fact, terror

suspect Osama bin Laden had no discernable link to the plant, which produced much of Sudan's medicine. Perhaps slowed by the U.S. media mantra that Sudanese openness to plant inspection was a propaganda ploy, it took the *New York Times* more than a week to clearly report that U.S. justifications had been "inaccurate, misleading or open to question."

More telling was the relative lack of emotion about White House deception. In the days prior to the missile attack, editorials and commentaries in top U.S. outlets marshaled unprecedented fury in castigating Clinton for not telling the whole truth about his sex life. There was almost no mainstream outrage at

AUGUST 20

Positively Reaganesque

Bill Press, the "left" on CNN's *Crossfire*, seeks Pat Buchanan's approval: "You know, Pat, I think this *Wag the Dog* talk is nonsense. I think the president did the right thing and I know you agree. I mean it was positively Reaganesque, what he did today. I just hope, since Osama bin Laden is still alive, that we have a few cruise missiles left and use them."

Primetime Diversity

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) supports the cruise missile attacks on national TV five times in under three hours: CNBC's *Hardball* (8 p.m.), MSNBC's *The Big Show* (8 p.m.), CNN's *Larry King Live* (9 p.m.), CNBC's *Rivera Live* (9pm) and Fox News Channel's *Crier Report* (10 p.m.). As an expert on integrity and truth-telling, Oliver North appears three times in less than two hours: *Hardball*, *The Big Show* and *Rivera Live*.

AUGUST 21

Quieting Libya

Experts repeatedly cite Reagan's Libya bombing as evidence that air strikes reduce terrorism. On ABC's *Good Morning America*, ubiquitous TV guest McCain remarks, "There are examples, such as our raid on Libya, where we bombed Tripoli back in 1986, which made Qaddafi rather quiet, and he's remained so ever since." (So quiet that two years later, according to U.S. intelligence claims, Libya had a hand in blowing up Pan Am 103 over Scotland.)

Sorry, Wrong Country

Pentagon correspondent Jamie McIntyre on CNN: "The U.S. picked the highly accurate cruise missiles for



Clinton for not telling the whole truth about an illegal bombing that killed and wounded civilians.

Here's a chronology of the first days of news coverage of the missile attacks:

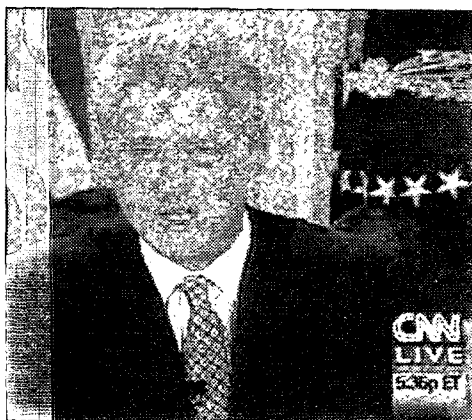
online

- Need a breakdown of the recent elections in Cambodia? Interested in listening to the U.N. debate on the International Criminal Court? Try Political Resources on the Net (<http://www.agora.stm.it/politic/>). This massive site offers a wealth of information on international politics, with links to historical, political and media-related sites for every country on the globe.
- The Cuba Poster Project (<http://www.zpub.com/cpp/>) is an electronic exhibit of poster art from postrevolutionary Cuba. Images currently online span the work of 10 graphic artists over 20 years and include portraits of Angela Davis and Richard Nixon.

the strikes against the Afghan camp because of their ability to fly with pinpoint accuracy." Days later, asked about reports that a missile had cruised into Pakistan, hundreds of miles off course, McIntyre says, "It wouldn't be unprecedented."

Inalienable Right

First sentence of the *New York Times* lead editorial: "The United States has every right to attack suspected terrorists if there is credible evidence showing that they were involved in attacks against American citizens or were planning such attacks."



(International law recognizes a country's right to strike another only when defending itself against an attack that is "imminent and overwhelming, leaving no choice of means, no moment of deliberation.")

Editorial Diversity

Washington Post editorial: "The United States was correct to send its military forces into action against terrorist bases in Afghanistan and Sudan yesterday." Headline of *Los Angeles Times* editorial: "U.S. Air Raids Necessary." Headline of *USA Today* editorial: "U.S. Strikes on Terrorists a Good Beginning."

Civilian Victims as Propaganda

New York Times correspondent Serge Schmemmann writes: "Given the growing sophistication of militant groups in the use of media, it is likely that television cameras will be invited to record any civilian victims or wayward bombs, with the United States portrayed as a heartless bully."

Bush vs. Bush

On *Nightline*, Ted Koppel asks his guests to discuss how "we" should conduct foreign policy vis-à-vis terrorism. The two-person panel is comprised of George Bush's Secretary State, Lawrence Eagleburger, and George Bush's director of the National Security Council, Richard Haass.

AUGUST 23

Shrewd Move

CNN correspondent Mike Hanna, one of the first journalists to see the destroyed plant in Khartoum, reports on the Sudanese government's response: "To allow unfettered media access to a suspected chemical weapons plant is either an act of extreme irresponsibility or it is a shrewd move to cast the burden of proof on the U.S. administration that authorized the attack."

AUGUST 24

Moral High Ground

Mike Hanna reports: "Through a series of orchestrated demonstrations and by giving unfettered access to the media, Sudan appears intent on gaining the moral high ground. ... This is all part of the process, it appears, of the Sudanese government to gain the moral high ground, and certainly, they have been giving the media here every access to the site."

AUGUST 25

A Gleaming Opportunity

In the *Washington Post*, Karl Vick reports: "In the smoldering wreckage of El Shifa, the rogue government of Sudan perceived a gleaming public relations opportunity."

The *Los Angeles Times* reports: "As part of the Sudanese government's public relations effort, meanwhile, Western journalists were given access to the bombed-out factory and were shown prescription drugs described as having been manufactured there."

August 26

A European View

A news article in the London-based *Financial Times* gauges the negative reaction of senior European diplomats in Khartoum, quoting one: "On the basis of what we know of the factory and the evidence we have been given by the United States so far, there is no reason to believe that the United States knew what was going on inside that factory. ... Nor is there any evidence that the factory had links with bin Laden. This robust support by other governments for the United States was frankly very stupid." ■

Jeff Cohen and Seth Ackerman are on staff at FAIR, the media watch group based in New York (<http://www.fair.org>).



Hot Off the Press!

After more than three years on the picket lines, the striking Detroit newspaper workers finally have something to celebrate. On September 1, the National Labor Relations Board ruled that the *Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press* had bargained in bad faith and caused the strike by using unfair labor practices. The board ordered the papers to rehire hundreds of reporters, drivers and other workers and to pay them millions in back wages. It's not over yet: The newspapers, which are owned by Gannett and Knight Ridder, are planning to appeal the decision.

Out of Sight, Out of Mind

On the afternoon of August 8, a doctor at Bronx Psychiatric Center, a state-run mental hospital in New York, granted a two-hour grounds pass to Alan Brown, a long-time patient. The pass permitted him to wander freely around the sprawling hospital campus.

By all accounts, Brown was a popular patient and also held a part-time job in the hospital store. But



according to workers and other patients, he was unhappy about his impending release as part of the

state's continuing program to reduce the number of mental hospital beds.

While out on his pass, Brown squeezed through a hole in a chain-link fence and walked onto some railroad tracks abutting the grounds. Then, around 1:30 p.m., just as an Amtrak train was speeding by, he jumped in its path and was killed instantly.

He was the second patient in a month to commit suicide at a state hospital in New York City. The first was Peter Fazio, who fatally slashed himself with a

razor blade at Manhattan Psychiatric Center on July 26 (see "Madness and Social Policy," September 6).

Many more patients, terrified about life outside hospital walls, have tried to take their lives. At least four who were recently discharged or about to be released from Bronx Psychiatric have attempted suicide in recent weeks, according to leaders of the Civil Service Employees Association, which represents state hospital workers. Several of those patients, union leaders say, should not have been slated for release. And many of those already discharged do not get proper follow-up care.

"Some of the people they're putting out there, it's just mind-boggling," says Lillie Gioia, a spokeswoman for the union. Gioia pointed to Kathryn Schoonover, the 50-year-old homeless cancer patient who was arrested in late August outside a California post office with 100 cyanide packets in envelopes that she was about to mail to scores of people. Schoonover had been released in 1994 from a New York state hospital.

State officials deny that there is a rash of suicide attempts or violence by their patients. When I pressed them for figures, however, they admitted that 41 patients have killed themselves at state mental hospitals or residential treatment programs since January 1996.

And those are just the successful ones. The state's Commission on the Quality of Care does not even keep track of attempted suicides. For those figures, spokesman Gary Maslin referred me to Gov. George Pataki's Office of Mental Health. But Roger Klingman, the spokesman at that agency, refused to furnish any incident reports. They are not public record, Klingman said, insisting that I take his word that there is no upward trend.

State Assemblyman Jim Brennan, a Democrat from Brooklyn, chairs the legislature's mental health committee. Brennan has been trying to monitor patient releases by Pataki's administration.

"Community facilities for the mentally ill are woefully inadequate," Brennan says. The state needs at least 10,000 units of housing for those who have been released, but so far only about 1,000 have been financed.

"What happens to the people who are patients when they're forced out?" Carolyn Eileen Pascuzzi asked me recently. Pascuzzi was in tears as she spoke. She is a 61-year-old patient in the geriatric ward at Bronx Psychiatric Center. She has been in and out of mental hospitals for the past 20 years.

Brown's suicide so deeply affected her that Pascuzzi composed a poem in his memory. Her words capture a tragedy our society continues to ignore:

*The train's coming soon, he's waiting alone
He hasn't a ticket, no plans to phone home
No one expects him, he's smoking a butt
Walking the track, he looks for a rut
He lays down right there, puts his head in the sand
Crosses hands to his heart and says, "Ain't that grand!"
Barreling through, the train comes to a halt
A man turns to mush, now who is at fault?
Blame the engineer: "He should have stopped sooner!"
But who really cares that this man is a goner?
Few will really even remember
Whose mother's son is lying dismembered
Listen out there, he could have been yours
"Oh no," you say, "we're better, of course
We never smoke, nor drink, nor get sick,
We idolize gold, that is our shtick
We take what we can and go on with our lives
For we're all very busy with our own little hives."
Do you know when you, like the train, start to halt
You will find your own mush
Through your own hateful fault. ■*

Many patients terrified about life outside hospital walls, have tried to take their lives. Some have succeeded.

razor blade at Manhattan Psychiatric Center on July 26 (see "Madness and Social Policy," September 6).

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State officials deny that there is a rash of suicide

Keepin' It...

BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

Although organizers insist that there's little competition between the two Million Youth March/Movement events that are being held in New York City and Atlanta on Labor Day weekend, the gatherings represent the ideological forces contending for the allegiance of young blacks.

The theme of the New York march, scheduled to take place on Harlem's Malcolm X Boulevard as *In These Times* went to press, is "Black Power into the Year 2000: Keepin' It Real; Saving Our Youth; Securing Our Future and Fulfilling God's Divine Plan. Bout it! Bout it!" The mixture of black nationalist ideology and hip-hop argot in that theme statement has typified the approach organizers used in publicizing the Harlem march.

The Harlem march is a one-day affair, while the Atlanta gathering is a four-day event which will include "God-centered, positive activities focusing on the development of youth in the areas of spiritual, social, economic and political development." The ideological range of participants in Atlanta is much broader than that in New York. Included among supporters are the Nation of Islam, the NAACP, the Urban League, the National Council of Negro Women and Black Youth Vote.

Both groups of organizers deny clashing motives. Beset with questions about the differences between the two gatherings, the organizers of the Atlanta event released a statement that embraced the Harlem march: "We do not see two marches as divisive in any way as long as we are centered on the principle of improving the lives of our youth, and not personality. We believe [the Harlem march] will help focus more attention on the plight of our young people." However, underlying these professions of unity and the "rah-rah" speechifying expected at both events is the struggle between the ideas of vulgar black nationalism—or, more precisely, a belief in racial essentialism—showcased at the Harlem march, and concepts of operational unity exemplified by the Atlanta gathering.

Although they are at ideological odds, organizers of both events credit Louis Farrakhan as their primary inspiration. "Minister Farrakhan was the one who conceived of the Million Man March, and that awesome event was the genesis of this movement," says Ashahed Maliki, 27, spokesman for the gathering.

Farrakhan's prominence reveals the growing influence of black nationalist ideas on today's youth. "I know that in New

York, and in other places I've traveled, there's a real feeling that white America has very little to offer us other than money," explains Rob Marriott, 26, a New York-based writer and hip-hop music critic. "So many feel overwhelmed by this system, and the Nation of Islam has the appeal of being outside of that system. It really isn't, but it has that feel." Ironically, though, the Nation of Islam is affiliated with many traditional civil rights groups in the Atlanta affair. The prospect of making common cause with these groups sent some organizers to New York to organize a separate event.

Malik K. Shabazz, co-organizer of the New York march, says his group tried to unify the marches earlier this year but was rebuffed by the Atlanta organizers. "They didn't agree with our position on black power," Shabazz says. "The difference between our march and what they are doing is that we are black nationalists, and we aren't compromising in putting together an agenda for black people." In that regard, the New York group copyrighted the name "Million Youth March" and prevented the Atlanta organizers from using it.



Khalid Abdul Muhammad. Bout it!

While they certainly reflect the anxieties and grievances of contemporary African-American youth, these contending events are also proxy sites for internal struggles going on within the Nation of Islam. This current struggle has been vividly personified by Khalid Abdul Muhammad, a charismatic orator and the primary organizer of New York City's march. Muhammad once served as head of the Nation of Islam's security arm and as a former national assistant to Farrakhan. He joined the Nation in 1970. By 1973, he had attained a high-

ranking position in the group's security force under the name Malik Rushideen. After patriarch Elijah Muhammad died in February 1975, and his son Wallace D. Muhammad (now Imam W. Deen Mohamed) distanced the group from its black nationalist foundations, bringing it more in accord with Islamic orthodoxy, Khalid left the group. He was among an insistent cadre of former officials that urged Farrakhan to

Real

desert Wallace's group and reassert the nationalist message of Elijah. When Farrakhan finally did break away in 1977, Khalid Abdul Muhammad became one of his closest aides.

Muhammad was publicly chastised by Farrakhan and dismissed from his post after a 1993 address at Kean College in Union, N.J., in which he professed an understanding for Nazi Germany's treatment of Jews. In the same speech, Muhammad viciously urged the slaughter of all white South Africans, excoriated black leaders who differed from the Nation of Islam's "white man is the devil" line, insulted Roman Catholics and generally exhibited a crudely racist world view. The infamous speech had gone virtually unnoticed until the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith placed an ad in the *New York Times* in January 1994.

Since his dismissal from the Nation of Islam, Muhammad has embarked on an ambitious schedule of speaking engagements and college appearances. His message, a mixture of fundamentalist Nation of Islam doctrine and revolutionary Pan-Africanism with a hip-hop flavor, has caught on among a certain coterie of black activists who place a premium on "no sell-out" leadership.

Although he has no solid base of organizational support, his articulate audacity has gained him a considerable underground following. "When you listen to Khalid Muhammad, you don't hear a typical black leader speaking, and young people connect to that," Marriott says. "He seems to be really speaking his mind and not altering his speech to suit white sensibilities. That's very attractive to today's black youth, who are fed up with the compromising and mealy-mouthed positions taken by most black leaders."

Knowledgeable observers see the New York march as Muhammad's attempt to establish a base of leadership independent from the Nation of Islam. Although Farrakhan has lent tepid support for the New York march, his regional representative, Minister Benjamin Muhammad (formerly Benjamin Chavis, dismissed head of the NAACP), has played no role in the preparation or publicity for the march. Khalid Muhammad has scathingly denounced Benjamin in the past as a "weak-kneed" Christian minister who joined the Nation of Islam because he had nowhere else to go. The antipathy between the two has never been hidden. Instead, Khalid has established and cultivated links with the city's sec-

ular black nationalist organizations like the United African Movement and the December 12th Movement.

Muhammad also has been a lightning rod in the public dispute over the Harlem march. New York Mayor Rudolph Guiliani attempted to block the event, denouncing it as a

A Tale of Two Marches

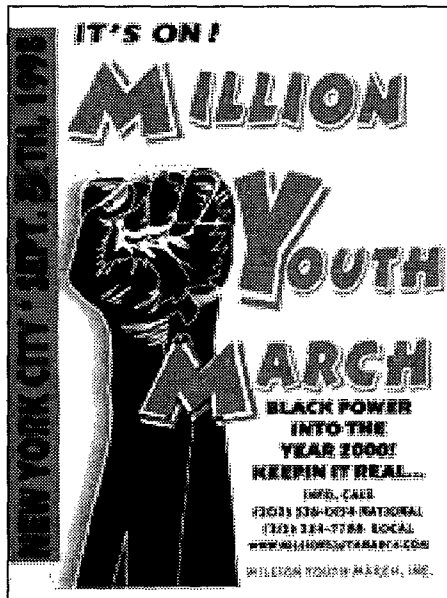
"hate march" because of Muhammad's role. The city refused to give organizers a permit for the march, arguing that the size of the event precludes effective security. But a federal judge ruled against the Guiliani administration on August 27. What's more, Guiliani's overheated rhetoric has served to exacerbate tensions in an already tense relationship between the mayor and much of the city's black community. "Khalid has already won because this march has been transformed into an anti-Guiliani march," Marriott says.

However, some Harlem residents have protested the event's potential for community disruption. Many of the region's black elected officials also have distanced themselves from the specific event, though some support the right to march. "Most of the city's black elected officials are opposed to Khalid," explains Herb Boyd, a New York writer. "How could they not be? His outrageous rhetoric makes it difficult for any of them to support him. But, rather than bringing unity to the community, I'd have to say that this march has brought division."

For some, Muhammad is an outsider who invited a lot of people to a block party without asking permission from the residents of the block. But Muhammad is not interested in mainstream acceptance. In fact, much of his appeal depends on his outrageousness. It was Muhammad, in his role as "supreme captain" of the New Black Panther Party, who in June led dozens of armed men to confront the Ku Klux Klan in Jasper, Texas, the site of a white supremacist murder of a black man this past spring. The Panther group was

bedecked fashionably in the regalia of combat chic, outfitted perfectly for the purposes of public relations. "Khalid is trying to tap into the anger of black youth and their frustration with the failure of the Million Man March and other previous efforts," says Clarence Lusane, assistant professor in the School of International Service at American University in Washington, D.C., and author of several books on race relations. Lusane argues that Muhammad may be charismatic and entertaining, but has no institutional base or organizational wherewithal.

He points to a development he considers far more dangerous than Khalid Muhammad's influence. "I'm very worried about our growing affection for mass symbolism," he says. "This new thought that if you can get a million people to attend some



event it translates into some kind of political agency is more destructive than anything we've done in history." The African-American community has yet to see any substantive product of the Million Man March, he argues, but that 1995 event is hailed as a historical milestone. "We need to get back to the basic idea of organizing for specific change and move away from our romance with symbolism," Lusane says.

Some of Lusane's sentiments are incorporated into the program of Atlanta's Million Youth Movement. Organizers, who for the most part are students and other youths, emphasize the ongoing commitment to organizing expected of participants. The movement has a three-part goal: "to promote leadership among youth while building bridges with our elders; inspire a God-centered youth movement; and to initiate a global, 10-year action plan." The Atlanta event also is concerned with symbolism. But organizers are attempting to forge continuing relationships with more established organizations and to help provoke the start of new ones, according to Maliki. Unlike the Harlem march, the city of Atlanta has been supportive of the Million Youth Movement.

Many observers of the march will attempt to gauge the allure of those differing strategies by the varying crowd totals. Most critiques will cast the two events as a contest between the forces of civil rights and those of nationalism. But, in reality, both gatherings are modeled on Farrakhan's nationalist/theological model for the Million Man March. Both conspicuously use notions of a "God-centered" movement and focus on African-Americans' internal agency. In order for either of the events to be taken seriously by African-American youth, they have to invoke the rhetoric of black unity and self-reliance. The black community remains in a nationalist moment. Even the major civil rights organizations are advocating the kind of self-help economic policies and notions of cultural autonomy that once were considered the sole purview of fringe black nationalist groups.

The Harlem march, under Khalid Muhammad's leadership, is pushing a harder line of black nationalism. He promotes the march's agenda as "black power, black nationalism, pan-Africanism and black liberation theology." More specifically, the agenda includes demands for the release of political prisoners, reparations for descendants of slaves and increased expressions of black unity.

By using this march as an organizing tool, Muhammad is attempting to parlay the evocative power of the 1995 Million Man March to legitimize his bold grab for leadership. What's more, he is announcing to the Nation of Islam that he is the heir apparent to patriarch Elijah Muhammad's more militant spirit, seeking acolytes from group members disquieted by Farrakhan's increasing moderation.

This is a very dangerous tactic for the 50-year-old, who has

been associated with Farrakhan for more than two decades and is infamous for taking violent exception to criticism of the group. He has cultivated many enemies both inside and outside the Nation of Islam. While he served as Farrakhan's security chief, Muhammad was widely feared for his extreme measures of assuring loyalty. Apparently, he has enough of an independent base that he has a sense of security.

It wouldn't be the first time that the Nation of Islam's inward rumblings had a public effect on black activism. The division in the mid-'60s between the "cultural nationalists" of the Congress of African Peoples and the "revolutionary nationalists" of the Black Panther Party was in part a result of forces unleashed by Malcolm X's controversial exit from the Nation in 1964. Malcolm was the group's most charismatic spokesman, and his rejection of the Nation of Islam's restrictive doctrine served to invigorate black nationalist discourse.

In recent years, Farrakhan has been moving away from the fundamentals of Elijah Muhammad's message. At the group's annual Savior's Day event last February, Farrakhan announced he had visited several non-black, Muslim nations and been accorded head-of-state status. More significantly, he seemed to be dramatically reinterpreting Nation of Islam doctrine and moving it away from its foundations in anti-white racism and closer to orthodox Islam. In the summer of 1997, Farrakhan also convened an International Islamic Conference in Chicago as part of a larger attempt to gain theological legitimacy—an affair that, incidentally, was strongly denounced by Khalid Muhammad for caving into "Arab Islam."

Before he was dismissed by Farrakhan in 1994, Muhammad seemed to relish in pushing the envelope of his boss's tolerance. Following the Kean College speech, which Farrakhan denounced as "vile" and "disgusting," his rhetoric became even more outrageous. "By being insubordinate and continuing to make incendiary speeches, he literally dared Farrakhan to oust him," says one Nation of Islam member who requested anonymity. "And [Farrakhan] took a long time to dismiss him, because he knows how popular Khalid is among many of the Nation's rank-and-file." Muhammad knows the danger of directly challenging Farrakhan's leadership, so he's making a more oblique challenge by connecting with the New Black Panthers and other established nationalist groups.

The Nation of Islam's enthusiastic embrace of the Atlanta event is Farrakhan's way of distancing himself from Khalid Muhammad's version of Elijah's doctrine. Also, according to knowledgeable sources, the Nation of Islam is doing all it can to undermine the success of the Harlem march. Nation members are forbidden from participating in the event and are actively bad mouthing it in black activist circles.

The analogy is necessarily imprecise, but there is an echo of history in this episode: Just as Elijah Muhammad's conservatism eventually pushed a more militant Malcolm X out of the early Nation, so has Farrakhan's moderation greased Khalid Muhammad's exit. Now we'll see if Muhammad's crude demonology rings a bell with black youth. No one will be listening more carefully than the Nation of Islam. ■

These contending events are also proxy sites for internal struggles going on within the Nation of Islam.

Free Fall

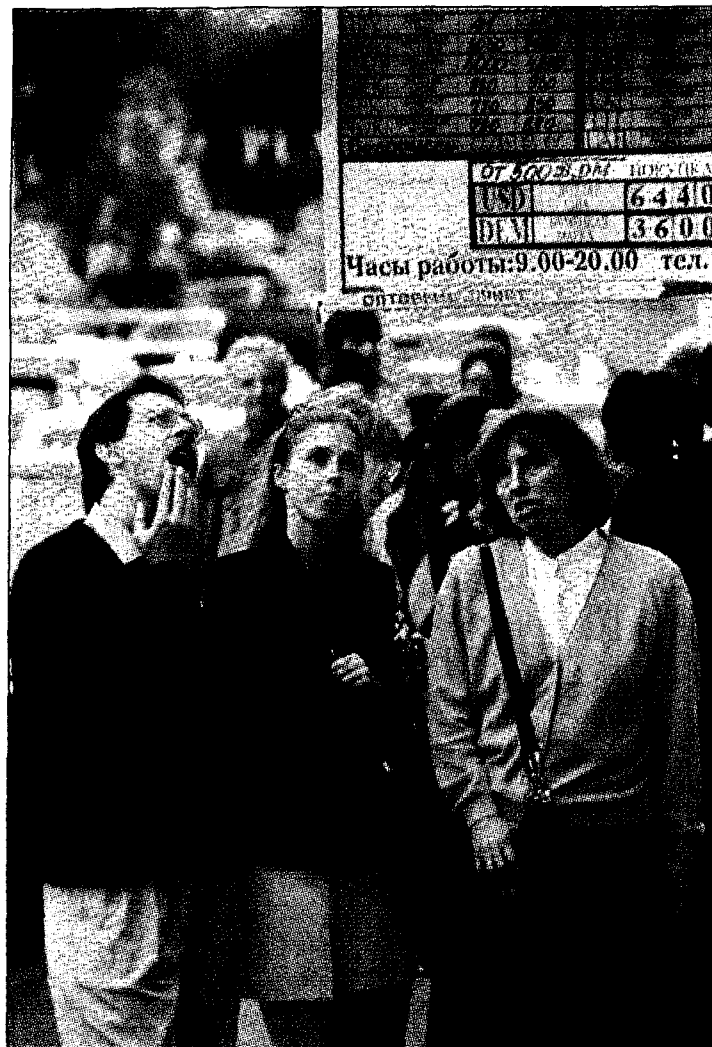
Russia
tumbles
into
autumn
after a
catastrophic summer.

By Fred Weir
Moscow

As Russia's public finances melted down, the ruble crashed, social tensions heated up and the political system built by President Boris Yeltsin began to unravel in August, no one remarked on the irony that these panic-stricken days marked the anniversary of the glorious "August Revolution" of 1991. Nobody wanted to notice, perhaps, because the contrast was unbearably stark.

In that delirious moment seven years ago, thousands of Muscovites turned out to defend their freely elected parliament—headquartered in the Russian White House—from troops sent by a gang of old-line Communists trying to arrest the breakup of the USSR. The coup plotters capitulated within days, without firing a shot, and amid cheering crowds a triumphant Yeltsin mounted a tank to proclaim the dawn of a new era. He pledged freedom, democracy and prosperity based on "a normal civilized market economy."

The Yeltsin who faced the nation in a painful, brief televised interview in late August was almost unrecognizable as



Muscovites watch the ruble plunge.

the same man, and he had no hope whatsoever to offer. Looking pale, ill and disoriented, he irritably waved away a question about the population's economic agony and promised, without giving details, to resolve Russia's worst crisis in postwar history. But a flash of his old defiance surfaced when he was asked about rumors of his impending retirement. "I want to say that I'm not going anywhere," he said. "I'm not going to resign. I will work as I'm supposed to for my constitutional term. In 2000, there will be an election for a new president and I will not run."

But Yeltsin's survival over the next few months appears increasingly doubtful as all the chicks from seven years of corrupt misrule come flocking home to roost in the Kremlin. "The Yeltsin era is over," says Alexander Kononov, an analyst at the independent Institute of Strategic Assessments. "He may remain, like a shadow in the Kremlin, but nothing will ever be the same again. Most Russians now see him as the problem, not the solution."

In the early autumn drizzle outside the White House—now the seat of government—a group of coal miners protesting months of unpaid wages were willing to put that thought more succinctly. "All our troubles have been caused by one man, Boris Yeltsin," says Alexander Vassiliyev, a 44-year-old

pit worker from the grim Arctic coal center of Vorkuta. He is one of 300 miners who have besieged the White House since last May with a single demand: Yeltsin must resign. "We are not ending our vigil until that bastard is gone."

Similar sentiments came from the streets of Moscow, where Russians are scrambling to spend their evaporating rubles on anything durable or standing in forlorn lines outside of troubled banks trying—often in vain—to rescue their savings. "Everything is collapsing as if it never existed, while he pretends to be Czar of Russia," says Svetlana Kiryanova, a 37-year-old graphic artist, jostling with other panic-stricken Muscovites in a downtown department store. Igor Svetlichny, a 27-year-old construction engineer, is more blunt: "Everything Yeltsin says and does is a lie. I'm sick of his face."

"We
are
not
ending
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until
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is
gone."

The current crisis may be dated from last March, when a jealous Yeltsin sacked his long-serving prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, a tough bureaucratic survivor, for seeming too credible in his constitutional role of heir apparent to the president. Sergei Kiriyenko, a young political unknown from the provinces, was installed in the post. The opposition-led Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament, was subsequently browbeaten—after a long and bruising battle—into approving Kiriyenko. "Yeltsin struck a blow against political stability just as a world-wide economic crisis was about to hit," says Viktor

Kuvaldin, an analyst with the Gorbachev Foundation, a think tank financed by the former Soviet leader. "A destructive genius couldn't have developed a better plan."

By late spring, Russian and foreign investors, spooked by the economic crisis in Asia, were stampeding out of the country. The Moscow stock market—ranked the world's best-performing in 1997—vaporized, losing almost 90 percent of its value since January. More seriously, investors started dumping Russian state bonds, the main instrument the government has used to finance its budget deficits in recent years. As the crisis gathered steam in July, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) stepped in with a \$22-billion bailout package designed to stave off the collapse of Russia's public finances. The markets paused briefly, then nose-dived again. On August 17, the Kiriyenko government bowed to the inevitable and permitted the battered ruble to find its own level. It immediately collapsed, losing well over 50 percent of its value in less than three weeks.

Yeltsin, who spent most of the summer on vacation, reacted to the crisis in late August by sacking Kiriyenko's 5-month-old cabinet and bringing back Chernomyrdin. But few believe that Chernomyrdin, who was prime minister from December 1992 until last March, will be able to stem the galloping financial crisis and rising social unrest. "Yeltsin has replaced a man who couldn't do anything in five months with one who couldn't do anything in five years," quips Boris Kagarlitsky, a left-wing philosopher with the Russian Institute of Comparative Political Systems.

The coal miners huddled in the rain outside the White House agreed. "I haven't seen any wages since last October—and Chernomyrdin was prime minister then," says Valentin Drachenko, a tall, slender 49-year-old with a harsh cough that he jokes is his only reward for a lifetime toiling in a Vorkuta mine. "Bringing back Chernomyrdin is just an act of desperation."

Russia's economic disaster runs far deeper than the current financial collapse. The country's economy has been shrinking steadily for almost a decade; investment in plant and infrastructure is currently below a quarter of the level it was in 1989. Much of the Soviet Union's former industrial heart is now a wasteland of rustbucket factories that produce little but do not go bankrupt. They survive on a trickle of state subsidies, by bartering with other insolvent firms and by deferring the wages of their employees. More than half of all Russian workers suffered disruptions in their incomes last year; one in four went for at least three months without seeing a paycheck. "The problem of wage arrears is a social time bomb waiting to explode," says Galina Strela, executive secretary of the 50-million-member Russian Federation of Independent Trade Unions, which is threatening to stage a general strike over the issue this fall. "Successive Russian governments have

created a semblance of a private economy and market institutions. Underneath, the picture is one of rot and ruin."

Russia's few profitable economic sectors were handed over to a small clutch of well-connected tycoons—so rich and powerful they have been dubbed oligarchs—after they united to help Yeltsin win re-election against a Communist challenger in 1996. "In Russia, politics and economics have always been two sides of the same coin," says analyst Kuvaldin.



Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin

"Political victory for Yeltsin brought financial victory for his backers. That's how the oligarchy was built."

But the vast revenues from Russia's lucrative raw materials and international arms trade vanished into the great global stream of capital or were perhaps lost in Moscow's now virtually extinct stock market. "Our crisis looks hopeless," says independent analyst Andrei Piontkowski. "The system of oligarchic capitalism created under Yeltsin has sucked the country dry. It's hard to see where we can find resources to implement any new economic policy."

The oligarchs may have been instrumental in pressuring Yeltsin to fire Kiriyenko and bring back their old friend

Chernomyrdin. "Chernomyrdin is their man," says Konovalov. "The oligarchs prospered under his administration and they feel he's the best one to save their situation now. He will never suggest seizing their property."

Chernomyrdin's first roadblock is the Duma, which dug in its heels and overwhelmingly voted him down in its first vote on August 31. According to the Yeltsin-authored Constitution, if the Duma rejects the president's candidate three times it must be dissolved and new elections called. Unlike last spring's struggle over Kiriyenko's confirmation, when it caved in during the third round, the Duma may be ready to go to the wall this time. "We cannot accept Chernomyrdin, he is an accomplice with Yeltsin in the destruction of Russia's economy over the past five years," says Gennady Zyuganov, the Communist leader whose party controls half of the Duma seats. "We are not afraid of dissolution or new elections. We will welcome it."

If Chernomyrdin is not confirmed, Yeltsin may disband the Duma, appoint the prime minister and rule by decree until a new Duma convenes. That would leave Russia facing months of turmoil without a legitimate government. Some analysts fear even the combination of extended political crisis and acute economic prostration. Even if the Duma does knuckle under to Yeltsin's will and approve Chernomyrdin, the outlook is bleak. Experts believe that Russia's economic troubles are only beginning, and the country's leaders will be heading into this storm with their credibility at its lowest ebb. The only time Chernomyrdin ever stood in an election—the parliamentary polls of 1995—the party he led won less than 10 percent of the popular vote.

Nor will Yeltsin's backing be much help. A survey of 1,500 Russians conducted by the independent Public Opinion Foundation at the end of August found that 67 percent blamed Yeltsin personally for the country's woes, and that 66 percent want him to resign. "In past crises, Yeltsin has always managed to strengthen his own position through confrontation with his opponents," say Igor Bunin, an analyst with the Center for Political Technologies, a private think tank. "But now he is being weakened by each new shock. It's hard to shake the impression that these are the final hours of this regime."

Nevertheless, Yeltsin was strong enough to host Bill Clinton at a lavish two-day Kremlin summit in early September. The two leaders produced nothing of substance, but tried to put the best face on their separate political troubles. Clinton addressed students at Moscow State University with a clichéd "stay the course" message. "I do not believe the solution for Russia is reverting to the failed policies of the past," he said. Presumably, Clinton was not referring to the failed policies of the recent past, but to the emergency economic strategies being debated in the Duma that would slap control on cap-

ital markets, create tariff barriers and perhaps re-nationalize some strategic industries. Clinton was emphatic that the United States will provide no new money, but said Russians could look forward to Washington's support as long as they "continue to move decisively along the path of democratic, market-oriented constructive revolution."

The IMF was issuing similar statements, and warning that it might delay payment of a \$4.3-billion tranche of its bailout package until Russia's economic situation stabilizes. Duma leaders recognize that as a veiled threat to cut off the loans if they fail to approve Chernomyrdin as prime minister.

The role that Western advice played in Russia's post-Soviet economic disaster is a rising theme among Russian thinkers and policy-makers, and Clinton's Moscow pronouncements offered little reassurance or clarity. Even the English-language *Moscow Times*—the voice of Russia's foreign business community—declared in an editorial that Clinton's message was empty and baffling: "[For years] the West has heralded vague 'reforms' and has encouraged Yeltsin to ... stay the course. If Clinton is now uncomfortable visiting such an obvious U.S. foreign policy failure as Russia, he is welcome to shoulder some of the blame."

Meanwhile, the foundations of the Yeltsin-era status quo are crumbling. Duma leaders say it's time to reverse the consequences of yet another autumn crisis: the bloody showdown of October 1993, when Yeltsin literally blasted his old parliamentary comrades out of the White House. In the political space carved out by his tanks, Yeltsin authored a new Constitution, bestowing the lion's share of power on the Kremlin and reducing the Duma to little more than an ornament. But financial collapse and his own bizarre decision-making—such as changing governments twice in six months—have pushed the aging and weakened president to the brink of oblivion. Not only the Communists, but also Grigory Yavlinsky's liberal Yabloko party, are pressing for Yeltsin to transfer some of his sweeping presidential authority to the Duma in exchange for its cooperation in confirming Chernomyrdin. "We are witnessing the breakdown of the system of power that Yeltsin built," says Nikolai Petrov, an expert with the Carnegie Endowment in Moscow. "Serious constitutional change is now on the agenda."

Or maybe not. Unlike his predecessor Mikhail Gorbachev, Yeltsin is not one to leave the game when he runs out of cards to play. Unless his increasingly fragile health suddenly gives out, Yeltsin will fight hard to stay in power. He recently replaced the head of Russia's secret police—the former KGB—with a man from his own Kremlin staff, and has been seen meeting recently with military and security chiefs. Another showdown could be in the offing. "Autumn is historically the time for political conflicts and revolutions in Russia, usually following on the heels of a deceptively quiet and peaceful summer," Kuvaldin says. "This time we are tumbling into autumn after a catastrophic summer." ■

"Yeltsin has replaced a man who couldn't do anything in five months with one who couldn't do anything in five years."

GHOST *in* the MACHINE

Old-time Chicago politics aren't dead yet. Just ask "Chuy" Garcia.

By Linda Lutton

CHICAGO

Jesus "Chuy" Garcia looked like a shoo-in. The incumbent Illinois state senator had a long history of work in the Latino neighborhoods he represented; he had 14 years of legislative experience, first on the Chicago City Council and then in the state Senate; he was respected at home and had won a reputation nationally and even internationally as a dedicated progressive and an advocate for the poor, labor and immigrants.

"He's the most admired Mexican-American candidate in the entire state," says Cook County Clerk David Orr, a fellow progressive who served with Garcia on the City Council during Mayor Harold Washington's administration in the mid-'80s. "He's been a good organizer, he's never a guy with a big ego, he's always willing to help other people ... a wonderful record, well liked, well respected—in my mind, he's really one of the most outstanding elected officials in the state."

He lost anyway. Garcia and his supporters are still reeling from his defeat by a no-name candidate—Antonio "Tony" Muñoz, a Chicago cop with no legislative or community experience—in the Democratic primary last March. Garcia admits that his campaign made some strategic mistakes, but he's also clear about the biggest factor in his defeat. "There is a machine in this town," he says. "It's a new type of machine ... but it still does what the old machine was capable of doing."

That old machine reached its height under Richard J. Daley, who served as mayor from 1955 until he died in 1976. Daley controlled 40,000 city jobs as well as nearly all 50 aldermen and Democratic committeemen. Gary Rivlin wrote in *Fire on the Prairie* that Daley's Cook County Democratic

Party central committee "ran city government just as the Communist Party's politburo ran the Soviet Union. ... It was no wonder that people outside the city's borders looked on Chicago with awe and horror. It was home to not only the last of the great big-city machines but also the most awesome of them all." Just as ward committeemen and aldermen were beholden to Daley, they had armies of precinct workers beholden to them. It was at the ward level that patronage jobs and favors were passed out: Knocking on doors and bringing



"We've witnessed probably the most rapid consolidation of power that any large city has experienced within the last 40 or 50 years."

—Jesus "Chuy" Garcia

out the vote for the machine slate on election day could get you a promotion and perks; losing your precinct could mean having to join the unemployment lines.

Daley's death and the internal fight over who would succeed him weakened the machine in the late '70s and early '80s, but the organization took its first real hit when Harold Washington won the Democratic mayoral primary in 1983, beating Mayor Jane Byrne and Richard M. Daley, Richard J.'s son, who split the machine vote. Washington was an African-

American, progressive reformer who promised to be "fairer than fair." A coalition of blacks, Latinos and progressive whites swept him to victory, and he became Chicago's first black mayor, serving until he died in 1987.

Richard M. Daley was waiting in the wings; right after his father's death he had been mentioned as a possible heir to the mayoral throne. Washington's death, and the almost immediate dissolution of his progressive coalition, offered the younger Daley his chance. He was first elected as mayor in 1989. Since then, Garcia says, "We've witnessed probably the most rapid consolidation of power that any large city has experienced within the last 40 or 50 years. The influence that the Daley group exerts is vast: City Hall, County Board, the agencies—CTA, Park District, Board of Education—they control it all. And we've witnessed the evolution of the machine from relying on the precinct captain to deliver, to relying on direct mail and utilization of the electronic media to stay in power. The precinct captains aren't that key anymore, but they still decide races like mine. They can still produce."

Daley has paid particular attention to Latinos, who are Chicago's fastest-growing and soon-to-be largest ethnic minority. As one *Chicago Tribune* political reporter noted in 1994, "The old line 'regular pols' are grooming some younger talent. These emerging new players are Hispanic, predominantly Mexican-Americans, and the mutual hope is that a white-Latino coalition can maintain hegemony over Chicago."

The Latino arm of the Daley machine proved in the Garcia race that old-time machine tactics haven't been shelved quite yet. "Patronage is alive and well in the city of Chicago even though he have Shakman," says Miguel del Valle, a progressive state senator from Chicago's Northwest Side and the

the current City Council was originally appointed by Daley—Garcia has been steadfast in pursuing a progressive agenda. He's been consistently critical of Daley's development policies for the city, protesting the upscale development of near-downtown neighborhoods that is displacing long-time and poor residents. His name also has been on the short list of potential challengers to Daley in the upcoming February 1999 mayoral elections.

"Chuy is about neighborhoods and he's about people and he's therefore a threat," says Alton Miller, Harold Washington's second-term press secretary and biographer. Miller says Garcia was "absolutely the target of a machine attack. Anytime anybody raises his head a little bit higher, the Daley folk want to knock it down. He was and is a real threat to their long-term aims, because ... he's a person who's going to be out there blowing the whistle and keeping people mindful of what the real priorities are."

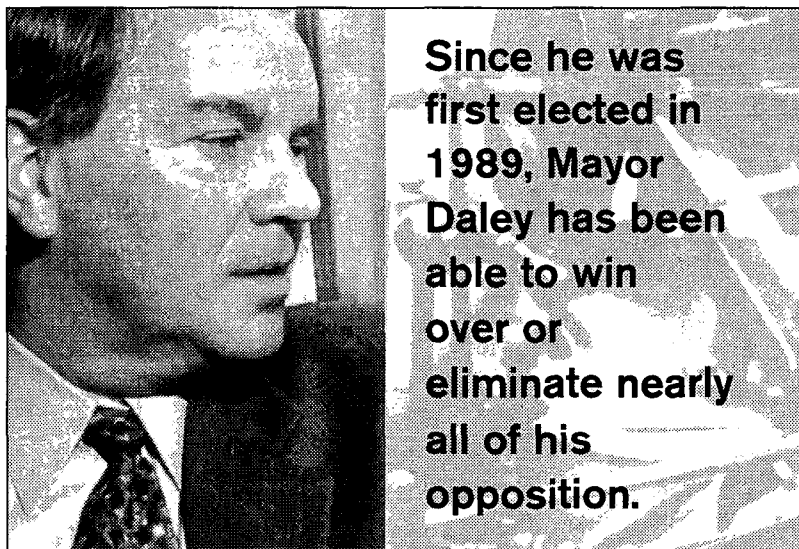
But it wasn't just the old Daley machine that took out Garcia. A newly organized Latino wing of the machine, the Hispanic Democratic Organization (HDO), made up of Latino leaders loyal to Daley and an army of Latino patronage workers, joined forces with white ethnic machine bosses to bridge a generation and ethnic gap and bring out the vote for Muñoz. Most HDO members are city workers who got to their positions by politicking and understand that's how they'll get promoted as well. While they may like Garcia, they're fundamentally concerned about getting what's theirs, and they believe that the way to do that is to support those in power and wait for the perks.

The combination of new and old that the machine put together for the primary does not bode well for other Latino progressives. Topping the hit list: 22nd Ward alderman and Garcia protégé Rick Muñoz (no relation to Tony) is up for re-election in February. Garcia-mentored state Rep. Sonia Silva won the primary by just 55 votes and in November faces a Republican challenger with Democratic machine ties. U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez is also vulnerable. If these three were replaced with machine Latinos it would almost completely wipe out independent Latino voices in public office. And Daley's Latinos have proven a loyal bunch: In an analysis of key City Council votes, for instance, *Illinois Politics* concluded that "Hispanic aldermen provided near unanimous support for the mayor, with only nine dissenting votes out of 157 cast by the seven Latinos."

The First District on Chicago's Southwest Side has a greater number of immigrants than any other district in Illinois. It is an odd mix of old white ethnic neighborhoods—parts of Daley's home ward are in Garcia's district—and the largest, most concentrated Mexican and Mexican-American neighborhoods in the Midwest.

March 17 was an election day that brought back memories of the way things used to be. Old machine veterans and their well-taught Latino brethren brought out the works for Muñoz: campaigning city workers, job promises and city services galore. Despite a cold rain that fell all election day, the streets of the district had the air of a fiesta. There were so

STEVE KAGAN



Since he was first elected in 1989, Mayor Daley has been able to win over or eliminate nearly all of his opposition.

only other Latino in the Illinois Senate. The Shakman decree is the federal court ruling that prohibits patronage hirings and firings. "Someday people will understand that this administration in many respects functions the way that the old administrations functioned," del Valle says.

Garcia gave the machine plenty of reasons to pick him as a target. While the mayor has been able to win over or eliminate nearly all of his opposition—more than a third of

many precinct workers out that in some places they stretched from one polling place to another, like part of a long parade snaking through the district. "This was probably the most effective mobilization of the city-county patronage army in a long time," Garcia says. "I don't think I've seen it like this in my 14 years in elected office."

Precinct workers were 10 deep. City building inspectors, off-duty cops and community policing volunteers huddled around polling places. Muñoz campaign workers wore yellow city-issued raincoats and warmed themselves beside portable Streets and Sanitation heaters. City trucks drove slowly down streets with loads of brand-new garbage cans. If it hadn't been for the rain, voters in one precinct would have had to practically step over city workers laying new sidewalks outside the polling place. Weeks before the election, campaign workers went door to door and made phone calls asking residents if they needed a tree cut down, new garbage cans, a street light turned on—and encouraging them to vote for the machine slate. People who had filed applications for employment with the city received anonymous phone calls and were told not to vote for Garcia.

City services were so critical to the Muñoz campaign that even Muñoz seemed duped by the tactic. When Spanish-language TV news asked him what he planned to do in the Senate, he answered in English—he doesn't speak Spanish—that he'd make sure residents got their city services, sounding more like he'd just clinched an appointment as a ward superintendent rather than the Democratic nomination for the state Senate.

Going up against the machine should have been nothing new to Garcia. He came of age at a time when the political consciousness of Latinos and blacks in the city was being jolted awake. By his mid-twenties, he was involved in some of the strongest anti-machine, progressive neighborhood organizing going down in Chicago. In the late '70s and early '80s, Garcia and other progressive Latinos built what would prove to be the most efficient independent political organization in the city and began to form coalitions with their progressive-minded African-American neighbors, a formula that eventually led to Harold Washington's victory.

Garcia spent much of his time before the March primary stumping for two candidates for state representative in his district. "There wasn't really a campaign focusing on my re-election," he admits. Garcia lost by 960 votes out of nearly 13,000 cast, his support dropping in every ward, including two of the most heavily Latino wards. "We took our eye off of the formula that's enabled us to get elected against great odds, to get re-elected, and then to expand," Garcia says. "That was framing the election as a fight between the neighborhood versus power brokers who want control—the machine. That's how we first got elected, that's how we get re-elected, and this last

time that wasn't the message that we had out there. As a matter of fact, the message was pretty vague."

Garcia's supporters had no reason to think that their candidate would lose. "Our voters were asleep on election day, and that's why we lost," says Garcia. "If we had felt threatened, and if we would have communicated that to our volunteers and to our voters, we would have had higher turnout. We didn't. They stayed home."

It's hard to fault him for being overconfident. The machine looked almost desperate. No one had heard of Tony Muñoz. He had no legislative experience and didn't speak Spanish. But Garcia ran headlong into a recurring problem for the left:

**Garcia helped
to build the
progressive
coalition that
swept Harold
Washington,
Chicago's first
black mayor,
into office.**



While he was debating immigration and welfare reform issues, gentrification and neighborhood development, the machine was passing out city services and counting votes. "We see things politically," says Larry Gonzalez, Garcia's press secretary. "[But] people just say, 'Hey. These guys came and they gave us something.'"

Garcia has blamed his defeat on the traditional machine wards, arguing that voter turnout among whites was higher than in previous elections while Latino turnout was lower. Why would whites be any more likely to vote for someone named Muñoz than for someone named Garcia? "They did their precinct captain a favor," says Richard Barnett, who's been involved in independent politics in Chicago's black community for the past 44 years. "Years ago, the precinct captain used to go around and tell the people in his precinct, 'Could you do me a favor?' In 1964, we elected a dead man for Congress, we sure did. Because the people did their precinct captain a favor."

As is his custom, Daley never officially endorsed Muñoz. But witnesses say his choice in the race and the importance he put on it was obvious to everyone from Springfield lobbyists to his Latino underlings. "This mayor has a reputation for being hands-off and for staying out of ward races and other kinds of races," del Valle says. "What people don't realize is that there's this roving band of City Hall Latino patronage workers who will go wherever they're assigned. This

last time around, they were assigned to concentrate on defeating Senator Garcia."

The "roving band of Latino patronage workers" is the HDO. HDO has been registered as a PAC in Illinois since 1993, with the avowed purpose of promoting "the goals and ideals of the Hispanic Community through the exercise of the right to vote." HDO's top guns have expensive City Hall jobs (head of the Mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, commissioner of Human Services, deputy commissioner of Streets and Sanitation, director of personnel at Human Services, etc.) and refuse to comment on the group's structure or activities. Muñoz was apparently a founding member of the group, but denies it has any political purpose, despite its name. "It's just a bunch of guys who get together, that's all," he says. "We basically talk. We've had picnics and stuff."

Insiders paint a picture of a large group of mostly city workers, 85 percent Hispanic. "HDO's 1,500 strong," says one Muñoz campaign worker at the Streets and Sanitation outpost where he's employed. "You're looking at that many city employees from various departments. When issues come up as far as services, we can touch bases on just about every department—Streets and Sanitation, whatever. When I knock on your door you can be sure of one thing: That when I ask you for the vote, 90 percent of the time you're gonna go my way. ... I got a lady here last night called me, 'Someone dumped a load of tires in my alley, what do I have to do to get 'em out?' First thing I'm gonna do this morning is make sure a truck goes over there. The people won't forget that."

HDO's win against Garcia will likely strengthen the organization significantly. The group took a huge bite out of Garcia's base in the Latino community. "The fact that they beat Chuy means more attention is going to be given to them from the administration," says one political consultant who's worked against HDO on the North Side. But he doesn't think Garcia-allied politicians up for re-election in the near future should throw in the towel just yet. "I think you're going to witness a backlash to Chuy's loss," he says. "There's a growing 'Remember Chuy' type of fever."

It's unclear how many voters actually rejected Garcia for

his politics. A conservative block of Chicago Latino voters definitely exists: To them it may not be important that a candidate speaks Spanish—they may speak only English themselves. Bilingual education and immigrant rights are not on their list of priorities. They have no intention of allying themselves with blacks and are most concerned with getting what's theirs. As one Latino machine precinct captain puts it, "If you're not supportive of the people that are in power, then you can just about count yourself out as far as getting that piece of the cake." But despite the media talking about "a message from Latino voters," it would seem impossible to deduce voter opinion on Garcia's politics in an election where city services and job promises played a bigger role than what either candidate thought about any given political issue.

For del Valle and Garcia, the loss of the Senate seat to a machine candidate is a shot at the heart of the fight for Latino self-determination, political representation and democracy. "The irony here is that it's the same individuals we went to court to fight to gain Latino political representation when we had nothing," del Valle says. "These days, it's not that they're electing someone who is non-Latino, but they're still around, determining which Latino."

"That's what you wind up with in machine politics—control," Garcia says. "The cost that you pay is the ability to control your representatives and to make them work for you. What differences are there between the mayor and his allies? There can't be differences. If there are differences you negotiate through jobs, contracts, things of that sort. It's about keeping total control of elected officials. And it's about eliminating opposition that may get complicated. And I guess that complication is the swing factor. If Latinos aren't under control, it makes governing risky and uncertain. It makes it democratic."

Adds David Orr: "Fighting for democracy in a place like Chicago—I'm not gonna compare it to a place like Guatemala—but it's a struggle. It's not like Wisconsin or Minnesota. If people forget that for a moment, that's when these kinds of things can happen." ■

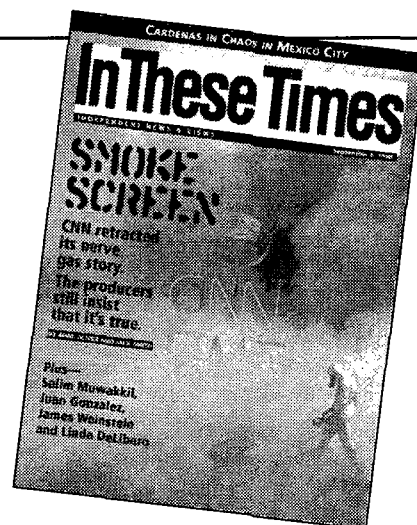
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The Original Riot Grrrl

**What Do Women Want?
Bread, Roses, Sex, Power**

By Erica Jong
HarperCollins
202 pages, \$25

Reviewed by Paula Kamen

In *Fear of Flying*, her best-selling 1973 autobiographical novel, Erica Jong shocked the masses with her candid, picaresque accounts of one woman's sexual gallivanting through Europe. But in her latest book, *What Do Women Want? Bread, Roses, Sex, Power*, she chronicles a more enduring and passionate life-long paramour: literature.

With her trademark honesty, clarity and depth, this collection of personal essays offers meditations on Jong's adventurous life, largely defined and textured as a reader and writer. Major subjects include profiles of literary figures who have influenced her intellectually or personally, such as Anaïs Nin and Vladimir Nabokov, both of whom have also stirred controversy with their honest sexual writings. The chapters are tied together with provocative quotes from the likes of Oscar Wilde and James Joyce. Jong discusses her own personal struggles as a writer—particularly as a woman writer—facing fears of rejection, pregnancy limiting her creativity and her mother's own unfulfilled ambitions.

And Erica Jong being Erica Jong, she profiles an intellectual life inextricably connected to the libido. The ever-present sexual drive that animated *Fear of Flying* also is an undercurrent in this book, but in more muted and indirect terms. In contrast to the frenzied, raging and emotional tone of *Fear of Flying's* Isadora Wing, this book reveals the measured and experienced perspective of an older writer who has been around the block and back—and shattered all illusions. "I used to be intrigued by the things that ended relationships," she writes, reflecting her evolving view of "the perfect man." "Now I am most fascinated by what allows them to continue. A marriage that lasts is always in a state of metamorphosis. The perfect



man transforms the perfect woman. They know each other by their willingness to be transformed."

Because of her passion and experience as an artist, this book is essential reading for the young woman writer. Jong serves as the hard-living intellectual feminist role model and advisor most of us never had. She is grounded in both experience and literature: Not only has she contributed to the feminist literary canon, but unlike most mentor figures, she has the added bonus of having partied with Henry Miller.

Unlike other memoir writers, Jong engages the audience by skillfully balancing the political and personal. While writing about her personal life, she mostly escapes the trap of narcissism by making measured, sensitive and relevant connections to the greater struggles of women her age. When bringing up her fear of pregnancy (discussed at length in *Fear of Flying*), she notes how her generation of women artists is the first "for whom pregnancy is not compulsory."

And though she always maintains a strong social conscience, she is also not afraid to be un-PC. Instead of using her books to preach one way of thinking, she explores the contradictions inherent in

the stories of good literature (her first love), as well as in the tortuous quagmire that is feminist heterosexuality. In *Fear of Flying*, Jong attempted to reconcile her sexual desire for her husband and other often insensitive lovers with her feminist frustration with them.

Almost 30 years after the advent of the modern women's movement, many young women harshly criticize older women's rigid political views about sex, such as those from the anti-porn movement of the late '70s. As a more privileged and less angry generation, young feminists have turned, for better and for worse, to investigate their personal struggles and how they challenge old feminist theories of how women should be. Jong was there from the beginning of the second wave—long before musician Ani DiFranco and pro-sex 'zines like *Bust*—portraying women's complex inner lives without a fixed and neat ideological scrim. She is the original riot grrrl.

Jong's discussions of literature and sex represent essential parts of her overarching theme: what women want. The book's subtitle sums up these universal and general passions. The first section, on power, discusses changes in women's roles. Jong makes a reliable witness, having been raised in the '50s and then emerging as a writer in college in the early '60s, when a visiting lecturer scolded her class that women didn't have the "blood and guts" to be writers. In this section, she picks out several women, such as the late Princess Diana, praised for her purity and virginity even after the supposed "sexual revolution," who serve as lightning rods for gauging public fears about women's sexual roles and power.

The next section, on sex, is largely about literature. Here she profiles several literary figures and reflects on their special contributions—and their contradictions. One of the most intriguing descriptions is of Henry Miller, who befriended her as an old man after the publication of *Fear of Flying*.

He was a true romantic even in his

rebellion against romanticism. Like most romantics, he did not always see people with perfect clarity. He loved or he hated. When his love failed, he often repudiated the love object totally. When a friend died, he ceased to think about him. He claimed he never mourned. He lived in the present more completely than any person I have ever known. For this alone, he shone out from other men as an enlightened soul.

The final section, "Bread & Roses," covers every other basic womanly need not included in the rest of the book. Jong explains that the term is from a "somewhat fusty 1914 anthem" that ends with the phrase, "Hearts starve as well as bodies/Give us bread but give us roses." Jong writes that "few women see power as an end in itself. The point of power is the freedom to cultivate roses." Some of the "roses" she discusses in the last section include the forces that sustain her spiritually, including poetry, her first love. She also meditates on the most comforting places, such as her writing perches in Connecticut and in Venice, which she describes as "a place that reminds me why I write: to create something both permanent and ephemeral—cities of water, cities of air."

This section, and the rest of the book, is most powerful when discussing the particular struggles of writing itself. Jong demystifies the fear involved in this process. As in *Fear of Flying*, one of the main lessons she promulgates is to act despite terror:

Every poem, every page of fiction I have written has been written with anxiety, occasionally panic, and always with uncertainty about its reception. Every life decision I have made—from changing jobs to changing partners to changing homes—has been taken with trepidation. I have not ceased being fearful, but I have ceased to let fear control me. I have accepted fear as a part of life, specifically the fear of change, the fear of the unknown. I have gone ahead despite the pounding in the heart that says: Turn back, turn back; you'll die if you venture too far.

Her years of experience pay off in imparting some basic lessons to writers in one of the last chapters, "Writing for

Jong, grounded in both experience and literature, has not merely contributed to the feminist literary canon. She has also worked with Henry Miller.

Love." "Despite all the cynical things writers have said about writing for money," she says, "the truth is we write for love. That is why it is so easy to exploit us. That is also why we pretend to be hard-boiled, saying things like no one but a blockhead ever wrote except for money (Samuel Johnson). Not true. No one but a blockhead ever wrote except for love."

Idealistic and realistic at the same time, she explains why writers have no choice but to be honest and follow their truest voice. "If you do it for money, no money will ever be enough and eventually you will start imitating your first successes, straining hot water through the same used tea bag. It doesn't work with tea, and it doesn't work with writing."

This brief book is difficult to criticize because, being well edited, it contains only the best of Jong's lifetime of nonfiction commentary. In the introduction, Jong says she slashed out hundreds of pages of her writing in compiling this collection of her work. Unlike other books of literary criticism and memoir that are prone to rambling and self-indulgence, this book doesn't have any fat. The one criticism I can make is that occasionally Jong goes too far in projecting her personal experiences to describe those of others. After describing how she was snubbed for an interview with Hillary Clinton, she makes that experience symbolize the First Lady's major personality flaw: not being able to determine her friends from her enemies in the media. But, as anyone who has been profiled in the media can tell you, the task of weeding

out back-stabbers and two-faced magpies is impossible—even for the most shrewd.

Also, in the first section, Jong connects the public furor generated over the 1997 trial of nanny Louise Woodward to a supposed trend of young mothers retreating away from professional life—a movement which is completely undocumented and, furthermore, not happening. "[Young women] saw what happened to their weary boomer mothers," Jong concludes, "and they don't like what they saw." But these criticisms are minor; exaggeration is a natural side-effect of a strong personality. And, in the end, Jong demonstrates her most prized skill—the ability of a poet to boil down and condense ideas into their most spare but intense forms. This book well documents the journey of a woman finding her voice and refusing to mute it—and learning to accept the fear, contradiction and doubt that will inevitably stand in her path. ■

Paula Kamen is the author of *Feminist Fatale and Her Way: The Report on Young Women's Evolving Sexual Choices*, to be published by NYU Press next year.

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The Last Dance, Hopefully

54

Directed by Mark Christopher

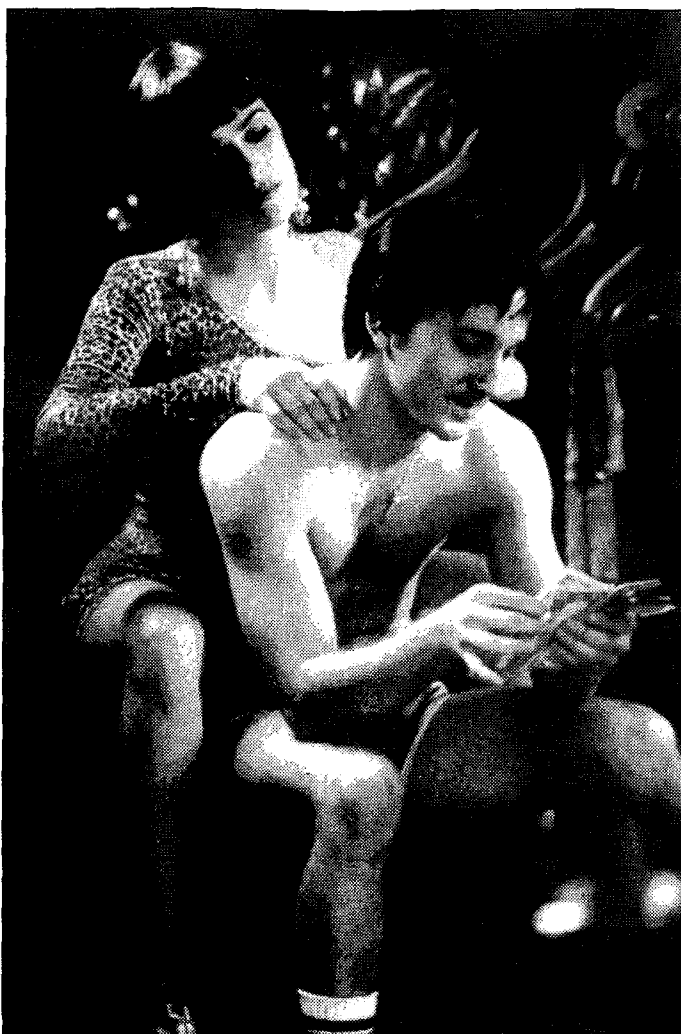
Reviewed by Jay Hodges

Before grunge, house, hip-hop and punk, there was disco. And before disco sucked, and then didn't suck, it raged. Disco was about partyland, about doing drugs, about having lots of sex with lots of people and about being outrageous in every way. It was, as it is now, about having fun—excessively.

More than 20 years after the disco culture emerged, it's easy to criticize the fun-obsessed self-absorption of its denizens. In the '90s we have a "been there, done that" attitude—we've had our fill, if we wanted, of the celebrity/drug/trend-saturated night life. But in the mid-'70s people were ready for reckless abandon, in gear for a disco-Disneyland. And if you could get in, you could find it all at Steve Rubell and Ian Schrager's Studio 54.

Before opening the hot spot on 54th Street, Brooklyn-born Rubell owned a fleet of Steak Loft restaurants that were managed by Schrager, who had been a real estate lawyer. The franchise never quite took off and instead the pair developed an interest in New York nightlife. With the perfect location, slick financial maneuvering and a few well-connected publicists, disco's Mecca was born. And considering all of the attention Studio 54 has received since in articles, books and films, if you never went you may feel as though you really missed out on something. But if Mark Christopher's *54* is an accurate portrayal, you didn't.

Christopher, the writer and director, delivers the package in a tight little bundle, but one devoid of content. *54* is the same predictable story of love found and lost, a *Bildungsfilm* whose protagonist loses his way in the world of vice and finds redemption in the NYU School of Business.



Salma Hayek and Breckin Meyer at work in *54*.

locked into the hedonistic scene when Rubell offers him a job as a busboy. Soon, Shane lands the most coveted position of employment in all of New York nightlife: Studio 54 bartender.

The three-mile commute and the Jersey stigma are too unglam for the boy and he makes his way to Manhattan to live the nightlife. The disco becomes his new home and its employees his new family. (*Boogie Nights*, anyone?) Shane moves in with co-workers Greg (Breckin Meyer), a busboy who had been vying for Shane's bartending job, and Anita (Salma Hayek), a coked-up coatchecker who wants to be the next big disco diva.

Pumped with his sudden status, Shane plunges headlong into clubland. In no time, *54*'s A-list celebrities

54 is structured around 10 nights that span a year, each reflecting a characteristic element of Studio 54. This fictionalized ride through the glitterati landscape is steered by Shane O'Shea (Ryan Phillippe), a teen from Jersey City who gets caught up in the hysteria. A mechanic fresh out of high school, he dreams about the glamorous, excitement-filled life in Manhattan as offered by Studio 54. On Shane's first venture to the club, owner Steve Rubell (Mike Myers) plucks him from the masses thronging the velvet ropes. Sporting a new hairdo and disco duds that approximate the appropriate look but still aren't quite right, Shane, sans the friends he came with, and, at Rubell's insistence, sans shirt, enters disco wonderland. On his second visit, Shane gets

call him "friend," sex is at his fingertips, and drugs and cash are there for the taking. His biggest concern becomes escaping his working-class roots. The Jersey accent doesn't fly, and he's neither as well-read nor as well-spoken—Shane agrees at a party when he is called a troglodyte—as the upper-crust circle he has slept his way into.

The good life reaches its zenith when Shane meets the enigmatic Julie Black (Neve Campbell), a fellow New Jersey expatriate with whom he is soon smitten. Julie is one of Shane's own, and, in his opinion, has made it big time (she's a soap opera actress). She embodies his Studio 54/Manhattan fantasy, but the euphoria over their fateful meeting wanes when she and a bigshot producer proposition Shane for a threesome that,

Julie promises, will help their careers. The interaction is an obvious commentary on the values of a night culture in which "free and easy" was the motto and every action was laced with ulterior motives. This scene also, albeit weakly, represents the beginning of Shane's coming into his own, as he grows more and more disenchanted with his new milieu.

Phillippe barely pulls off the disaffected suburban teen, especially in contrast to Heather Matarazzo's portrayal of Shane's easily excitable, adoring kid sister Grace. In front of the camera, he seems ill-at-ease as a disco boy toy. This is disconcerting considering the vapidness of his character and that so much of his performance relies simply on his standing around with "the body of David and the face of a Botticelli," as one club seductress puts it. Phillippe particularly pales next to Campbell, who inhabits her dual roles easily, effortlessly switching between dull suburbanite and vamped star fucker.

Like Campbell, Myers deserves notice. He veers from his usual funny-guy schtick to a more serious role as the desperate, drug-abusing club owner Rubell. As with Phillippe's Shane, Myers' Rubell isn't too complex, requiring only a strung-out, ineffectual personality that Myers, with comic flair, handles superbly.

To keep things interesting, the film is



Director Mark Christopher.

peppered with cameos by everyone from Donald Trump and Cindy Crawford to Sheryl Crow and Lauren Hutton, the '70s supermodel and Studio regular (who can now be found in the J. Crew catalog in her favorite chinos and twin-set). Disappointing is the lack of characters that portray Studio 54 celebs who were an integral part of the scene. There's an Andy Warhol and a Truman Capote, but what about Michael Jackson and Roy Cohn? How believable is a Studio 54 without Liza Minnelli or Elizabeth Taylor?

The cult of celebrity was Studio 54's main attraction. Only there could a service industry employee snort cocaine with a supermodel, or a blue collar worker grind hips with nobility—once you were in the doors, you were "in." For this reason alone, it is rather shocking that Christopher's film pays little heed to the Studio regulars.

Ultimately, though, 54's script is simply poorly written. No matter what star graced the screen, it would still be a bore. (And who came up with the idea of making a disco movie without including a single track by Donna Summer?) Perhaps it is too Herculean a task to distill the essence of a legend.

It's unlikely that the elements that constituted Studio 54 could blend so perfectly to create an equivalent cultural explosion today: The spectre of AIDS looms large and indiscriminate sex no longer shares the popularity it once did; club music, though pumped with energy and very danceable, is missing that campy yet liberating spin that disco had; and the very perception of celebrity has shifted today so that everyone is either famous or knows someone who is.

As the drag queen, a Studio has-been, sitting next to me at the screening sighed, "Those were the days." ■

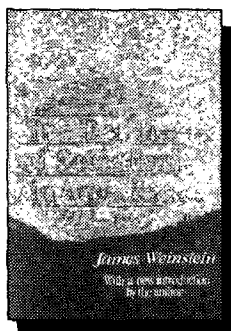
Jay Hodges is a writer based in New York City.

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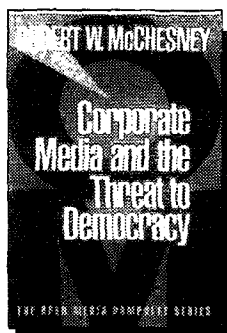


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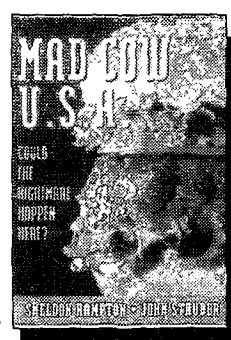
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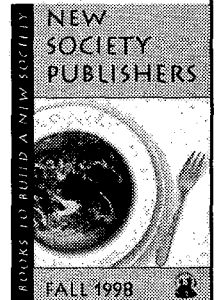
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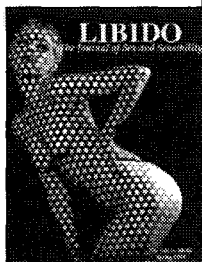
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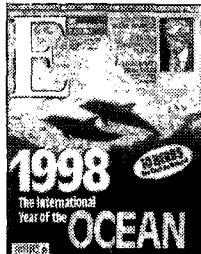
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area. Jenenne Whitfield, director of the project, asks, "Would you rather have someone walk down the street and wave to you or would you rather duck gunshots?"

Even though Harvey's group represents a small fraction of the community, it has the support of the City Council. Heidelberg's publicity—which includes an upcoming HBO/Cinemax documentary—rankles the Council. From its perspective, the Heidelberg Project exposes tourists to a part of Detroit that should not be visited. "It's crap," says Kay Everett, a member of the Council. "I don't want people coming into that neighborhood to look at garbage."

Guyton contends that city officials are less concerned about the garbage—the artist cleaned up an illegal dumping site to create the project—than his message. Heidelberg calls attention to the conditions of a poverty-stricken neighborhood: Polka dots blot out politicians' names on campaign signs; shoes hanging from trees represent lynchings; an abandoned car filled with trash recalls the devastation that resulted when the auto industry left Detroit. And Guyton's work has inspired others: Anonymous protégés paint polka dots, Guyton's trademark, on public monuments and blighted buildings to protest the city's negligence.

Guyton contends that the Council is using the small opposition group to justify its own agenda. Heidelberg challenges Detroit's downtown-centered planning and vision. As an economic development project, Heidelberg seems backward—there are no entrance fees, spin-off shops or tax revenues—but, in fact, it has succeeded where large-scale urban renewal projects have failed. Heidelberg is an accessible, open-air exhibit that costs the city nothing.

In contrast, the Renaissance Center, a \$350 million skyscraper built in the late '70s, was all but given away to General Motors in 1996 for \$72 million. The \$200 million People Mover, Detroit's gesture toward mass transit, circles a small retrenched downtown, serving only a handful of sightseers. And, in Detroit's latest development scheme, a group of downtown casinos are being constructed.

The recent ultimatum is not the city's first attempt to destroy the Heidelberg Project. In 1991, former Mayor Coleman Young ordered a surprise raid in which bulldozers razed several Heidelberg structures while helicopters circled above. Although there were 15,000 abandoned houses in Detroit at that time, Young claimed that he wanted to build residential housing on the single block where the project was centered. The site was never developed, and Guyton rebuilt his installation.

City officials continue to cite new housing development as a reason to destroy the Heidelberg Project. Although the immediate vicinity contains at least 50 buildings that are



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slated for demolition or rehabilitation, local politicians are focusing on the few houses and lots that form the Heidelberg Project. Whitfield believes that city officials are fighting with added vigor because of a Michigan law that allows a person to take a land title after openly possessing the land for 15 years. Guyton could therefore claim property rights just two years from now.

Some have suggested that Guyton transplant his artwork to commercial venues downtown. The artist, however, has steadfastly refused, insisting that "the best place for Heidelberg is right here." He says his art is inspired by his neighborhood and is intended to benefit its residents.

The majority of residents do enjoy the Heidelberg Project, which in the absence of local parks, provides a free and safe public space for them to congregate. It's a playground for children, who paint and play among the sculptures. In an area where the local elementary school no longer has an art program due to recent cuts, Heidelberg provides a creative outlet

for children. Mame Jackson, an art professor at Wayne State University, says the project unfairly comes under attack because its benefits are impossible to quantify. "You can't measure if a kid is inspired," she says.

In the upcoming weeks, the opposing forces will battle to determine the future of Heidelberg. The city has threatened to send a wrecking crew to demolish the project. Supporters have promised to lie down in front of bulldozers, and they are organizing fund-raisers, petitions and

demonstrations to rally public support. "We are going to stay and fight," Whitfield says.

Whether or not he can stave off the demolition, Guyton believes he has accomplished a great deal by generating a city-wide debate about the purpose of art. "I'm glad they're talking," he says, smiling mischievously. "It's working."

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BY BEN REAMES AND LEXI RUDNITSKY
DETROIT

In the midst of the seemingly endless rows of vacant lots and boarded up houses on Detroit's East Side, a single block on Heidelberg Street metamorphoses into a surreal artscape: thousands of shoes line the lawns of brightly colored abandoned houses, bicycles dangle from trees, and an abandoned bus and deserted boat overflow with stuffed animals. The motif of polka dots—imprinted on everything from front porches to car hoods to driveways—stands in stark contrast to the blighted surroundings.

This installation, known as the Heidelberg Project, is the work of 43-year-old artist Tyree Guyton. Guyton grew up in the neighborhood and has spent the past 13 years collecting discarded appliances, broken car parts and other junk to decorate his street. With the help of neighbors, he has filled vacant lots with stuffed animals, painted grinning rictuses on crack houses, and made a sculpture garden out of a dumping site. Guyton's neighborhood, once known only for its crime and poverty, has become the third-most-visited attraction in Detroit.

The project, he insists, was conceived accidentally. It all began one day when he was wiping his brushes on an abandoned house. As he continued to paint the house and cover it with found objects, he realized his purpose: He was protesting the abandonment of Detroit after the 1967 riots. He was combating the emptiness with plenitude and color.

Despite Heidelberg's popularity and acclaim—Guyton won the Spirit of Detroit Award and was named Governor's Artist of the Year—the Heidelberg Project has generated opposition from a few residents who resent the influx of tourism and complain that they are sick of living amongst "garbage." The Detroit City Council has rallied behind them and has threatened to destroy the project if Guyton does not dismantle it immediately. Janice Harvey, a neighbor and president of the community-based Gratiot-McDougall United Development Corporation, argues that Heidelberg is an eyesore and a health hazard that brings a constant stream of traffic through the neighborhood. "[Residents] feel like animals in a zoo," Harvey says. "People view the neighbors as part of the exhibit."

Heidelberg supporters counter that tourism has virtually eliminated the drug trade and prostitution in the immediate

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